

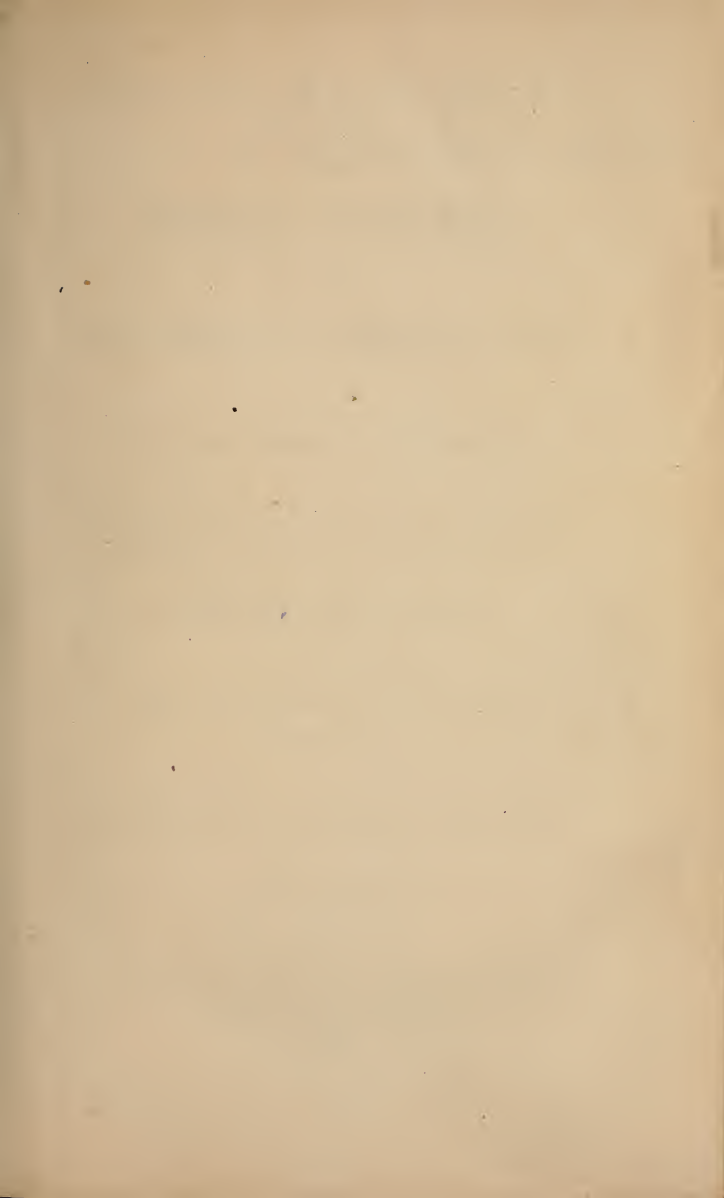
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THE

INFIDEL'S CONFESSION,

OR,

THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN UNION

FOR THE

WORLD'S SPEEDY CONVERSION ;

DISPLAYING THE CAUSES AND EVILS OF SCHISMS AMONG CHRISTIANS;
THE BIBLE'S GREAT, BUT NEGLECTED TRUTH; THE NATURE,
OBLIGATION, PRACTICABILITY AND PLAN FOR UNITING THE

CHRISTIAN WORLD.

BY B. THOMAS TAYLOR,

NEWCASTLE, KY.

"That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*"—*John*, xvii: 21.

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INTRODUCTION.

MANY evils are essentially self-corrective. One needs no admonition to snatch his own hand from the fire. Experience is an effective teacher. Fools, only, can ignore its lessons. To the wise, they are memorable and practical. Domestic extravagance, in its oppressive consequences, soon suggests the importance of its own correction. The inebriate is soon forced to feel the weight of those evils, to which he sells his health, respectability, and fortune; and though their remedy in the destruction of a tyrannizing habit, may be deemed too dear to purchase, he yet feels that the transgressor's way is hard. The evils which this volume exposes, and whose only remedy it is confidently believed to demonstrate, have long been felt by the people of God. They are such as to impress every mind; and though many have felt and deplored their hindrance of the world's conversion, yet few have felt the fearful responsibility incumbent on all to remove them, and with prayerful and patient effort, sought to discover their remedy. Yet some efforts have been made. The most impressive feature in the religious history of the nineteenth century—the *Union Prayer Meeting* of almost every locality—shows that the religious world grows tired of the sectarian fetters which separate the kindred souls of those who love our common Lord. "The Christian Alliance Society" was organized for the purpose of promoting that intimacy of union and coöperation among Christians, so evidently required by the Bible, and so earnestly desired by evangelical Christians. It is granted that its failure can not be ascribed to a want of energy, talent, and piety employed in its advocacy; and yet such failure should not forestall the hope, or discourage the efforts, to secure an end so desirable; because, 1. The scriptures still require the union of God's people, as necessary to the world's conversion. Permanent obligations require repeated efforts to discharge them, and

no number of failures can destroy such obligation. 2. All efforts heretofore made, are more of a congregational, than of an individual bearing. The only way to eradicate even national evils, is to secure their renunciation by individuals. So long as the obligations to Christian union are held forth, as having a congregational bearing only, the individuals will feel free to disregard them. The plan which the author urges, bears on individuals. Admitting, then, that talent, piety, and energy, were not wanting in the advocacy of "The Christian Alliance," its failure can not be justly alleged to discourage all efforts on the subject. Its failure was a consequence of its basis, or plan.

To examine all the bases which have been urged, for the desired union of Christians, would be quite a hopeless undertaking, and would extend this paper beyond a reasonable length. The one proposed by Dr. Albert Barnes, of Philadelphia—a learned Presbyterian, and most acceptable commentator on the Bible—is supposed to contain all that is good in all the others. Let us examine it with care and candor. Every effort to remove the evils of disunion among Christians, should be hailed with grateful pleasure, by all the lovers of Zion. I would not, therefore, for one moment, disparage the zeal, learning, and piety of any who have labored for this worthy end, and especially would I recognize and commend the laudable intentions, and the earnest, though unsuccessful efforts of Dr. Barnes, whose basis I now propose to examine. He will surely not be displeased, but rather gratified, if in aught, its defects are discovered, and the remedy made plain. To reveal such defects is the object of this article. The remedy will be found demonstrated in the body of the volume. Two short paragraphs will sufficiently give the basis.

"I. Perfect freedom among Christians, in forming denominations according to their preferences, or their views, in regard to worship and doctrine, and in attaching themselves to such denominations as they may choose."

If by the "perfect freedom," is meant non-interference by civil law—that coercion nor persecution for conscience' sake, shall be brought to bear—the paragraph is commendable and liable to no objection, unless, that, in our country, it is not needed. But if it means that each Christian should concede to all others that such is their *moral right*—that God has granted to all Christians such right, it is liable to the most serious objections. That this is the sense intended by the author, is evident from the next paragraph.

"II. The second thing we demand and claim, *as following from our argument*; as essential to the proper unity of the church, and as lying at the basis of all negotiations in regard to the union of the different denominations—a *sine qua non* in any attempt to promote such a union—is, that, in the evangelical denominations, there shall be a recognition of the ministry, membership, and sacraments of each other."

1. This virtually and essentially forbids any effort to promote the unity of God's people. To license a canonization of antagonisms both in belief and practice, is certainly inconsistent with an earnest effort to promote unity in the same. Awarding to all the moral right to make their own varied "preferences and views" their ultimate guide, "in forming denominations," and "in uniting with such as they choose," what motive superior to this recognized right, could our author's basis urge to enforce the obligations of unity? What good could be rendered common to all "the evangelical denominations," by the sanction of this basis? Would it reconcile them all to build and worship in the same house, to sustain and pray for the same preacher, to display their benevolence through the same channels, to patronize the same religious literature? None will affirm. The basis has then no other force than, by clear implication, to declare that, with all the antagonisms that now divide and distract Christians, there is as much unity of faith and harmony of action, as can or ought to exist. Indeed, it goes further and authorizes every Christian to head a new party in religion, if he choose to do so, with full assurance that such denomination shall, by all the others, be recognized "in its membership, ministry, and sacraments," and even in its "doctrine." Instead of proposing to reduce the number of conflicting sects, it offers to become the mother of an infinite number of others.

It denies to each Christian the right to contend for the adoption of those Bible principles, Catholic as the Spirit of God, which, once understood, would become the nucleus of universal Christian faith and coöperation, and thus reduce to one, the existent number of sects in religion. Hence it virtually forbids all effort to accomplish the very end it declares desirable, and would completely destroy, in all Christians, the sense of obligation to become one.

2. It denies the divine organization of the church, and leaves the metes and bounds of the "one fold," in which the "one people," shall be protected and ruled by "one shepherd," to be established by any one ambitious of such honor; and inculcates the incredible absurdity, that, amid all the wrangling of sects thus established, in fearful con-

flict with each other, is to be recognized the unity which the Bible inculcates.

Now the Bible either does, or does not, reveal the laws of church organization. If it does not, then all who lead or aid in the organization of a church, usurp an authority which God has, by implication, refused to grant. To argue, then, that all who wish may found a church, with the sanction of all others, is to advocate universal usurpation of authority in religion. If the Bible does reveal the laws of church organization, those laws are meant for universal adoption by all Christians. All can, and are required to understand and adopt them. No man, nor body of men, can, with impunity, supplant them by others. To deny that they can be understood, is to charge our Great Teacher, very presumptuously, with having failed in his effort to make the whole path of duty so plain, that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." We understand the directions given by men for church organization, why not those given by Christ? The inference is irresistible, that men can teach more plainly than Christ—a sentiment of which any Christian would surely be ashamed. Yet it is as creditable to an enlightened mind as that other, which is embalmed in the heart of almost all Protestant Christendom, viz.: that all the conflicting Creeds and Confessions of Faith endorsed by Christians, are consistent with the Scriptures: at least enough so, to secure for each of their denominational abettors, the excellent cognomen of a Church of Christ, universally recognized in its "doctrine," its "membership," its "ministry," and its "sacraments."

The divine laws of church formation are consistent. Ten thousand churches, formed by their adoption, would be uniform. A member of any one could find, in any other, a home just like his own. Essential conflict would be impossible. The reception and expulsion of members, the administration of the ordinances, and the appointment of officers, would all be regulated by the same laws. Nothing else is involved in organization.

These laws are binding. None may discard them, or sanction their rejection by others. The basis of Dr. B. proposes to sanction, by the wholesale, the assumed authority to set them aside, and to receive in their stead such as the varied whims and fancies of men may prefer. Christians can not, therefore, generally adopt it. They are a peculiar people, and one of their peculiarities is, that, with a large amount of love to man, they blend an unflinching fidelity to the

commands of God. They hold divine truth superior to fellowship or popularity. What individuals may do, and yet be Christians, I would not affect to determine; the power of educated prejudice *may possibly*, for a long time, suppress the dominion of right principle, even over a Christian; but to say that it certainly does, would be to go beyond God's Word, which says to all, "If ye are my disciples, ye will do *whatsoever* I command you." Hence but few could adopt this basis with all its inevitable consequences staring them in the face.

3. This basis erroneously presupposes the question generally decided as to what denominations are evangelical: "There shall be among the evangelical denominations," etc. It aims to provide for unity among them. It implies the impossibility, or the injuriousness, of embracing in the union any others. In this it is right. Evangelical and anti-evangelical denominations could no more unite than oil and water. The word, evangelical describes the only denominations that, within the metes and bounds of New Testament law, can unite. It means *according to the Gospel*. Denominations according to the Gospel are necessarily a unit in their religion. No efforts are needed to unite them. As drops of the same fluid, they need only an opportunity. They have the same organization. Like the different congregations of Old School Presbyterians, they would naturally recognize each other in every respect.

But the author doubtless intends by "evangelical denominations," those whose creeds and ministers set forth the saving and sanctifying elements of the Gospel; distinguishing between truths essential and truths not essential. To such distinction we should withhold assent, because too ignorant to pass sentence upon the non-essentials of God's appointment; but let the question be tried upon its own merits. It is designed to extend the mantle of fraternal recognition over all the children of God. Having departed from the meaning of the word evangelical, some standard must be adopted. Let us try, as a test of evangelical character, the presence of Christians. No other test will serve the author's purpose. Is Catholicity evangelical? Yes; all admit there are some Christians even in "Mystery, Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations." If not, why, in the Apocalypse, are they exhorted to "come out of her?" Shall Romanism, then, be reckoned evangelical? If so, an error needs only the honor of a place in a church creed, to be so regarded. But Dr. B. did not intend the adoption of

this rule; though it is the only one that can meet the case. No other construction of his basis can make it the union point of all Christians.

Let us, still more in accordance with the Doctor's intentions, invite to this basis *five* denominations that he will no doubt consider evangelical: the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Episcopalians, the Congregationalists, and the Baptists. How much antagonism even here forbids union! Episcopacy and Congregationalism—the former contending for a centralization of ecclesiastical power in the optimates of the church; placing at their disposal all things, the reception and expulsion of members, the ordination of officers, and the absolute control of all the church property and finances; the latter, frowning upon such arrangements, as oppressive to God's heritage, and vesting all the ecclesiastical power equally in all the members of the church. Yet this basis proposes to unite them without interference with their opposing features. A strange union it would be. "A house divided can not stand."

Witness again the conflict of the pedobaptist and antipedobaptist features of these churches. The pedobaptists contend for the introduction of infants into the church. Take a paragraph or two from that creed which is more evangelical, perhaps, than that of any other pedobaptist denomination, the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, adopted by the General Assembly, 1821, and emended 1833, *Chap. xxv*, Art. ii: "The visible church, which is also catholic or universal, (not confined to one nation as before under the law,) consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, *out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*" In the Methodist and Episcopalian creeds, we find the doctrine of infant regeneration in baptism. The antipedobaptists consider all this no better than infidelity, varnished over with the semblance of truth. Now Dr. B.'s basis proposes no remedy for these conflicts, over which have been fought the fiercest battles of Christendom. How can they consist with any thing like unity in faith and practice?

Now Christians, when they let differences divide them at all, generally do, or ought to feel that such differences are matters of conscience. They can not sincerely ignore them as causes of dissent. Repentance and acknowledgment, on the one side or the other, are necessary to reconciliation. The Doctor's basis requires each one who is aggrieved by the

faith and practice of others, to lay a painful restraint upon his conscience, and, in effect, declare that those things which cause him real, soul trouble, do not affect him at all; though one who is really devoted to God might truthfully say, "These denominations reject and disobey more or less of the divine laws of church organization. Some things, which I think clearly taught in the Bible, they wholly neglect, or supplant by human tradition. I fear to recognize them as churches, lest God curse me for participation in their evil deeds." I say, though such are the sentiments of all sincere and honest Christians, who conscientiously can not become ecclesiastically identified with those whose differences they would tremble to avow, yet this basis would, without any regard to those misgivings, bring them to do the very things from which they honestly recoil. It would indeed be an unholy union. Christians in general are honest reasoners; but a glaring sophism alone could express their apology for such violence to conscience: "I know that I should encourage the spread of error, and such as endangers the souls of men, and even the existence of the church. My sister denominations are, however, honest or dishonest in their faith. If dishonest, the sin is theirs, not mine. If honest, while they say they are aiming to get to heaven, I would not seem to hinder their enjoyment by proscribing their principles. If they think them right, to them they are right and safe. I will not adopt but only recognize them." This is the last edition of Christian (?) charity. How can a Christian adopt it? But nothing else could give currency to Dr. B.'s platform. Used in another case, the sophism reads exactly as follows: "I know that my neighbor, either wilfully or ignorantly, is preparing for himself and family a sumptuous feast, fatally tainted with arsenic. Invited to share it, I dare not partake extensively; but will sanction it by my presence, and will affect to enjoy it, lest I should else alienate the affections of my neighbor. In so doing, I shall incur no personal injury, because instructed of the evil." I ask, Can a Christian have such charity? and I answer, I doubt it.

The disunion of Christians originates in mutual doubts of evangelical character, and a conscientious fear of extending a promiscuous sanction to both good and bad. These scruples, so right and evincive of piety in themselves, Dr. B.'s basis only proposes to blunt and stultify. I use strong language to be understood. Though he does not avow the consequence, yet it is involved in his basis, and he can not avoid the one without recalling the other. Men's errors

should never be referred to their intentions, until their awful consequences are seen and avowed.

4. Union on this basis is essentially impossible. All are to retain their denominational identity; all claim the right to expel for errors of faith or practice; but there is nothing from which they can expel but the communion table. Some denominations expel for the avowal of doctrines held by others; some for indulgences tolerated by others; some for omissions permitted by others. The sentiment is: "It were wrong in us to sanction those errors of faith or practice by the admission of their subjects to the communion." Now the Baptists expel for dancing—the Episcopalians permit it; the Methodists for inveighing against their discipline—the Presbyterians and Baptists are constantly in the habit of doing this. This basis requires each denomination to allow that which its sister denominations allow, and to sanction in the most solemn manner all that they avow. Now, while this basis proposes to leave untouched the distinctive features of all the sects, its adoption would actually destroy them all, and bring the purest sects of the compact on a level with the most corrupt. It could do no good; it would only spread the leaven of error more universally among all Christians, and promote a morbid charity in its general recognition.

The Congregational and Episcopal orders would, by this compact, be required to change their peculiar features, or at least to ignore them. An endless dispute would mark the effort to decide whose peculiarities could best be ignored. Could the point ever be settled? There is no more reason to believe it would than that any other point of religious controversy ever will.

How could Baptists and Pedobaptists, while retaining their peculiar views, unite? If both are conscientious, the Pedobaptist can not ignore the importance of infant membership, nor the Baptist recognize it as a church ordinance. The latter believe and declare it an offshoot of popery, and radically destructive of church purity, and even of the church itself. Would the Doctor's basis constrain the Baptist or the Pedobaptist to yield the point of controversy? Neither, I apprehend. What then? Would it constrain them to drop those points, and concur in pronouncing them unworthy of controversy? Never. Hence the union is impossible. Were we to enter it with so many, and so serious restraints on our consciences, we could not warmly advocate it; and hence the union would only be nominal.

The mode of baptism is also fiercely contested between the

denominations selected for this compact. The immersionists deny that sprinkling and pouring are baptism at all—deny that they are, to their recipients, a valid passport to the Lord's Table, and other immunities of his house. Their opposers, it is true, do not retort by denying, in the same way, the validity of immersion; but still the developments of the last thirty or forty years, prove that the opposers of immersion will not end the controversy by yielding their preference for any considerations heretofore laid before them. How, then, can they mutually recognize each other's "sacraments?"

It may be said that Dr. B.'s basis, if generally adopted, would soon evince the truth that in all the principles essentially antagonistic held now by Christians, the one side or the other is wrong, and should be for the great good which God has connected with the desired unity, renounced. But when two are at variance, it is not easy to see how they can be reconciled by an umpire pronouncing each of them right, as Dr. B.'s basis does the contending sects in religion. The umpire, being an impartial judge, should decide which party is wrong, and what indemnity is right. Repentance and acknowledgment, without conviction of wrong, are impossible, however essential to a reconciliation even among Christians. Where Christians are the parties, this plan, it is believed will always succeed. Where it fails, no other ever has succeeded. The basis should set forth the truth, that wrong is the cause of the antagonism it proposes to destroy; and then labor to show the wrong and its remedy. Such are the objects of this volume.

D. N. PORTER.

EMINENCE, KY., *May 25th*, 1859.

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THE INFIDEL'S CONFESSION,

OR THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

CHAPTER I.

THE fame of Dr. Stewart, as a Presbyterian minister of burning zeal and irresistible eloquence, had reached the thriving village of L——, in one of the Southern States. The town had a growing population of about 2,200 inhabitants. The Presbyterian church had long languished under the ministry of a highly intellectual, speculative, systematic, precise, sermon-reading pastor. The Methodist and Episcopal churches were in a condition very similar. A few old members that prayed for Zion's peace and prosperity urged the importance of inviting Dr. Stewart to hold with them a meeting for a few weeks. He came, and a good deal more than realized their expectations as to his earnest eloquence, and untiring zeal. No studied flourishes in his sermons, nor sparkling jewels of classic beauty aroused and defied the criticism of his hearers. His language was the vehicle of earnest thought, and his rhetoric the outpouring of an earnest heart. He did not sit and wait for an organ or a drilled choir to grind out the songs of Zion. He sung such songs as the congregation could aid in singing, and his

own rich voice blended its devotional tones with those of the congregation. As he pleaded with sinners to repent, and with Christians to awake to duty, big tears rolled down his earnest cheeks. He would often forget that it was fashionable to stand in the pulpit until the sermon ended, and would go down among the congregation amid his burning appeals. Nor did the house of God alone witness such earnest efforts to do good. The interim between public worship, was spent in faithful religious conversation. He visited every brother known to neglect his church and his Christian duties. Many "forsook the assembling of themselves together." With them he expostulated. Some took no part in the Sabbath school. He pressed their duty. Some observed not family religion. He wept over them, and besought them to neglect no longer. Some were at variance. He became earnest umpire in reconciling them. But best of all, his exhortations, prayers and example aroused their starchy, literary, fashionable Pastor to suspect the soundness of his own hope in Christ, and drove him to seek the Lord as an awakened sinner. He now felt his weakness as a little child, and in bitterness of soul deplored the pride and formality which had marred the happiness and usefulness of his past life. He was reformed.

Two weeks passed away, and the Pastor and members of the Presbyterian church were completely revolutionized. The pulpit was now filled by a soul, as well as a body—by the power, as well as the form of godliness. The sermons moved, and breathed, and warmed the souls who heard them.

The diction and figures of discourse were lost in the glowing ardor of pious eloquence. The dazzling blaze of awakened piety revealed the deformities of Christian character. The deceived were alarmed by a trembling sense of their unregeneracy, and were led to seek the Savior in earnest. Hypocrisy no longer masked the monstrosities it had before heralded for true piety. The splendor of godliness sparkled from the pulpit in the exhibition of truth, felt and realized, as the people had never before witnessed it. The self-deemed Christians of full grown stature, now felt themselves the merest babes in Christ—felt that they *needed* the gospel, and prayer-meetings, and everything else that might promote their growth in grace. They had for the most part used these means to accommodate their Pastor rather than to invigorate their own souls. Awakened piety in the person of both Pastor and members now walked the streets, and sought the hovels of wickedness and poverty, as well as the mansions of wealth, declaring with tears the woes and dangers of the wicked, or in the intoxications of buoyant, heaven-lit Hope, antedating the joys at God's right hand. The Reformers were loud in their censures of such fanaticism. The Methodists and Episcopalians did not feel called upon to engage in the meeting. They heard only a few of those burning Gospel sermons, and received only a few of those earnest visits. Hence the awakening among Christians was partial. Though the sermons had all been directed to the church, they had a powerful influence on the unconverted, who perceived by them the alarming difference between themselves and Bible Christians,

and, forgetting the foibles of Christians, which they had construed as apologies for their crimes, they sought the Lord for their own personal security. Though they felt not a sensible disparity between themselves and ordinary Christians, yet they readily saw the contrast between themselves and the purity and elevation of character required by the Bible.

Ten days longer continued the meetings, and many giving evidence of sound conversion, were joined to the people of God. An incident, which may well be styled a feature of that revival, is worthy of note. From the first of the interest among the Christians, an ex-Judge Rolan, who was enjoying, in retirement from business, the abundant fruits of his more youthful energies and success, and whose amiable wife was a pious member of the Presbyterian church, had been a regular attendant upon the sermons. He was an avowed Infidel. His position and intelligence, his high-toned morality and sense of honor, together with his wealth and benevolence, gave him an influence not easy to be broken. As the massive oak sometimes shades many smaller trees of the forest, nor permits them to receive either the full fury of the threatening blast, or the unmitigated power of the sun, so he, winding the vigorous tendrils of his influence through all the ramifications of society, holds, by his example, as with a fatal spell, a multitude of his inferiors, who lose the consciousness of their individualism in an obsequious regard for his superior wisdom and prudence. For his conversion all hearts were moved. He had read the Bible a great deal and with close attention, and while far from wishing

to influence others to reject Christianity, he yet took no pains to keep his skepticism private; but, fond of seeming to be influenced by reasons, he strenuously vindicated himself from a want of reason in rejecting the Christian religion. During these meetings, the abiding concern of his wife for his conversion was deepened into a holy agony. Day and night did she wrestle for him in prayer. Nor was she without sympathy. Many prayers, both public and secret, were offered for the Infidel husband of the pious wife. Poor woman! Little else engaged her heart but the desire and hope of his salvation. Oft did she bathe his bosom with burning tears, and plead in sobs, that he would give his heart to God. He, too, often let fall the big tear, and shook like a trembling leaf. He never frowned on these efforts to break his spell of unbelief, and win him to the Savior. Oft did he read again that Bible against whose inspiration of God, he had found and entertained so many objections. "I would give the world to believe it," he would often say. "Could I do so, I should not neglect my soul; but I can not, though I declare I fear to disbelieve it. The Doctor's earnest sermons have, I think, dissipated all my difficulties but one; but that, I fear, none can remove. He has tried it most faithfully, but it still stands like a mountain of rock between me and Christ. I mean the divisions among Christians. Would not a divine religion unite all its recipients? I have ever believed this with so much confidence that if Christianity proves to be a verity, I expect to lose my soul through the insuperable nature of this barrier to belief."

As the labors of the meeting drew to a close the agony of that disconsolate wife became more intense. The last evening had come. To hear the earnest farewell of the loved man of God, the sanctuary was crowded at an early hour. In a pew near the pulpit sits in melancholy sadness the Infidel, worn out as with sorrow and sleeplessness,—his wife like a hopeless mourner lingering beside the grave of affection, leans on his bosom, her heart struggling to relieve itself in heavy sighs and sobs. Few hearts were there but sympathized with hers. As the minister announced his text, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved," her soul was once more convulsed with anguish; and then, as if in settled grief, she became composed, resolved henceforward to vent all her efforts in prayer to Him who turneth the hearts of men whithersoever he will.

A few weeks after the meeting closed, the spiritual stupor was as profound as ever. Infidelity, staggered and confounded for a while by the terrible majesty of Zion partially awake, now rises as if to triumph over a slaughtered foe. The Judge had constantly acknowledged the superior morals inculcated by the Bible, and encouraged and assisted every effort to promulgate its principles. No house of worship was reared in his vicinity without his aid; nor did he aid less in supporting the ministers.

A few months after the meeting, he was summoned to Texas to attend to some secular interest. As the time of his return home neared, his soul instinctively yielded itself to the dominion of those affections inclining him to hasten his journey. After an

impatient and weary voyage across the gulf, he reached New Orleans, transported by the idea of being once more so near home. An imperative and unexplained message, "HURRY HOME!" had been two days before lodged with a friend. Two days more, and, as he drew near, he saw his beautiful village home; but alas! it was the meeting point of gathering mourners. How struggled in his bosom, the desire, and the fear, to know the cause! As he stepped from the coach, the tidings met him, that the partner of his bosom had sickened and died! How sunk the strong man's heart when he felt the stroke! And as he gazed for the last time on the pallid features that were now composed by an angel's hand, and lit by angel's smile, and recalled the tears and agony his infidelity had caused that loved sleeper and the voice that accompanied the last, gentle, earnest pressure of her hand, now lifeless on her bosom, "Seek the Lord while he may be found," the spell he had so much deplored was broken. His infidelity gave way. On two accounts he was now a mourner—the loss of his companion, and a sense of his guilt as a sinner before God. He became a man of prayer. How void that heart from which the cold, damp grave had now received its most cherished treasure, its only earthly heaven, not leaving even the hope of a heaven above! But as he turned away to smother the griefs of life in his lone bosom, bereft of that sympathy which had shared his joys and halved his sorrows, a deeper wound was festering in his heart. He saw himself as a ruined sinner. But as the unconverted too generally do, when awakened, he commenced trying to

work out his salvation by the law. He clung to his prayers, tears, sacrifices of selfish gratifications, and even to self-punishments, and reformation, with such confidence as to exclude a sense of his dependence on Christ. But the arrow of conviction was lodged in his heart. The Physician of souls alone could extract it, and heal the wound. For weeks he was a sad mourner. Nought kept him from despair but the strange and unaccountable belief that he was getting ready to trust in Christ for salvation. Many Christians offered what assistance, and instruction they could give. But they did him little or no good, as they always manifested their prominent object to induce him to join their church. Some even tried to persuade him he was a child of grace, and urged him to come along the next Sabbath and join the church. He told them he was far less anxious for a place in any church than to be a Christian. Some did not even then desist until he assured them how honestly he doubted whether any church with whose organization and polity he was yet acquainted was a New Testament church. They then rather cast him off and treated him as a bigot. But it only made him the more sensible how deeply he needed an Almighty Savior, and he continued to seek him in reading the Bible and in prayer.

It was on Sabbath night. He had returned from a sermon on the text, "O, that I knew where I might find him!" The sermon had moved his soul. He felt that he must die or find relief. After reading for some time he closed the Bible in solemn meditation. "A thousand times have I already done, in vain, what I am now about to repeat with-

out the least assurance of any better effect—bowed down in prayer that God would enable me to see what keeps me from trusting Christ as my Savior. Still am I as guilty and hard-hearted as ever. The heavens over me are as brass. My prayers reach not the ears of the most high. I have hoped in the efficacy of repeating them, and would gladly do it ten thousand times, if life might be spared so long; but the truth is now too clear, that they are without merit in the eyes of God, and I know not what to do. If I continue to pray so till the day of death, what will it avail? *Nothing, nothing!* I should be lost. What shall I do? Ah! what *can* I do, but die as I am and be lost? I clearly see that is my just doom, unless God saves me without my doing any thing to merit salvation. Will he do that? No; I can not believe it. But one thing I know and feel as I never conceived or felt it before, *he is just though I may perish*. I deserve to be lost, and lost I must be. But O, how shall I endure even life without hope? Let me once more view the character of Christ, and see if I, in all my sins, may indulge the hope, that he will even yet in his great compassion, pity and save me. ‘Alas! and did my Savior bleed? and did he die for me.’ Glorious Savior! It would be some relief, if I might only serve and glorify him in hell, and serve him I will, while I live; yea, ‘and I will trust him though he slay me.’ Bless the Lord, O my soul! I have found the mystery. It is, trust and live. How simple! and yet I could not understand it till now. *Christ is my righteousness*. He is the very Savior I need. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear

Him." Believing in Christ, he rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. Justified by faith, he had peace with God. He wanted to tell the whole world the way of escape he had found through Christ. He could not resist the inclination to call on several of his neighbors even at that late hour to tell them. He became at once a zealous Christian—visited all the prayer-meetings and publicly told how great things the Lord had done for his soul. Indeed he thought no one before had ever made so narrow an escape. He was not ashamed to exhort sinners publicly and privately; would always lead in prayer when asked to do so. It seemed his fixed purpose to do as much for Christ as he had done against him. Being often urged by his friends to join one or another of the churches of his place, he gave them assurance of his Christian fellowship for all God's people, and reminded them that when he surrendered himself to Christ he had solemnly promised to serve him all the days of his life. "Now," said he, "if I do n't take time to read his Word, I shall not know what he requires of me. When I learn that from his Word, you shall hear from me."

CHAPTER II.—*The Trial.*

For more than a year Judge Rolan had, in connection with other religious duties, pursued, with diligence, the study of the Scriptures. Because of his impassioned exhortations he had often been put forward in the prayer-meetings of the different churches. His piety was felt. A love of God's truth was a strong feature in his religious character. He considered it sinful to quote the Scriptures out of their connection to prove even a truth. For instance, he heard a Presbyterian and a Reformer one day discussing the depravity of human nature. The Presbyterian quoted: "The whole head is sick; the whole heart is faint. From the crown of the head to the sole of the feet we are bruises and wounds and putrefying sores." The Judge interrupted him: "My brother, your doctrine is certainly right; but you misapply the Scriptures. That passage only notes the chastisements with which God had sought to correct his people, before he gave them over to the fury of their enemies. As if he had said: 'why should I punish them longer by peacemeals.' They are already bruised all over by my chastisements. I will, in my fury, make a full end of them at once." He studied the Bible to learn the primary and contextual meaning of every passage. And as he used for the most part no notes or commentaries, but directed his eyes immediately toward the blaze of Bible truth, he advanced very rapidly. It was the honest question of his soul, "What are God's instructions?" So deep was his reverence for His Word, that nothing deduced

from religious customs, however honored by time, or sanctioned by names, weighed the value of one feather with him, further than it was sustained by the Bible. He was not in the habit of controverting. He would press the claims of Christ upon sinners without any hesitancy; but in doctrinal matters, he was forming his views from the Bible, and would not controvert, lest he might advocate what is wrong, or oppose what is right, and thus bias his own perceptions of truth. While he would listen to discussions by those whose views he deemed more mature than his own, he feared the effect of excited efforts to prove, or to refute, those sentiments, whose real truth or fallacy, and bearings he was honestly trying to learn from the Scriptures.

Sometime after this, he was favored with a visit from Mr. Sellers, the Presbyterian Pastor in L—. The usual civilities being exchanged, they held the following conversation.

Mr. S. "Well, sir, I believe it has been a little over two years since I learned your determination to inquire of the Bible what course you ought to take as a Christian. May I propound the friendly inquiry—'How are you progressing?'"

J. "Certainly, sir; and I cordially thank you for the interest you manifest. I have lost but little time from the investigation; and feel that I have wasted less in it; for never did I spend two years more pleasantly, or more profitably, than I have those just past. My inquiries have been directed to the discovery of my own duty as a sinner ransomed by the blood of Christ, and owing all my joys and hopes to him. In learning some duties I have had but little

difficulty. To learn some others has very much embarrassed me, and still does so."

Mr. S. "Have you come to the conclusion that you ought to join the church?"

J. "Yes, sir; I had not gone once through the New Testament before I learned that Christ requires believers, 'both men and women,' to be baptized and added to the church. This is one of the points I found it so easy to settle. It is too plain for doubt."

Mr. S. "Well what were some of the points you could not settle so easily? Was one of them the mode of baptism?"

J. "By no means. I learned from the little book by Edwards, which you sent and requested me to read, about two years ago, that Greek scholars encounter great difficulties in settling this point. But I am no Greek scholar, and being compelled to make up my views from our common Bible, I have found no difficulty as to the mode of Baptism. Is our Translation a safe guide?"

Mr. S. "O yes; but what do you understand it to teach as to the mode of baptism?"

J. "From the 3rd chapter of Matthew, I learned that Christ 'was baptized in the river of Jordan,' and 'being baptized, he came *up out of* the water.'—That John baptized in Aenon because there was much water there.—That we are to draw nigh to God with the full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with 'pure water.'—That the Roman and the Colossian christians 'were buried with Christ by baptism,' and that the same Apostle who uses this last clause, also states that there is 'one Lord, one faith and one bap-

tism;' thus in effect denying that more than one exists by divine appointment. To administer this, Luke says that both the candidate and the administrator 'went down into the water,' and when the act was performed, 'they came up out of the water.' After all these plain instructions, I could not have any difficulty about the *mode* of baptism. I have of course inferred, that baptism is scripturally administered by burying the whole body, so as to cover it with water."

Mr. S. "Did not Edwards on Baptism, show you many good reasons to doubt the reliableness of your conclusion?"

J. "I think not. If I understand him at all, he deems it impossible to learn what our Savior means by the act of baptism. He seems to think Christ appointed that sacred ordinance to be a subject of important and endless strife among Christians—important, or he would not have written a book merely to show that no one can understand what Baptism is. For my life, I can not sympathize with his difficulties. I confess that I am forced to consider him somewhat skeptical. He constantly ridicules as nonsense and puerility the most natural and honest conclusions to which my Bible leads me."

Mr. S. "But do you not find baptism sometimes used in such connections as forbid the idea of immersion? If this be the case, your conclusion is not a good one."

J. "No; but I should then conclude that the Bible contradicts itself. While it designedly makes the impression that there is only one baptism, and that immersion, if it so speaks of that baptism as to show

that it can not be immersion, then indeed my conclusion is wrong; and it seems to me that I should agree with the infidel that the Bible is contradictory in its teachings. As an infidel, I have often contended, and the ministers of Christianity conceded, that one irreconcilable contradiction in the Bible would nullify its claim to divine inspiration. Would it not with you?"

Mr. S. "Truly. But if I convince you that the Bible does speak of baptism in such connections as obstinately forbid the idea of immersion, I hope you will not reject the Scriptures before you hear what may be said to remove the appearance of contradiction."

J. "Certainly not; but I tremble for any one who will make the effort. For it seems to me impossible, if there is only one baptism, and that is immersion, as it certainly is, that this baptism can ever be any thing else. But it is a question of fact, which you seem willing and anxious to prove, and I will not detain you."

Mr. S. "If you will consult Matt. iii: 11, 'I indeed baptize you *with* water,' I think you will be puzzled to tell how one can be immersed *with* water. If immersion had been intended, I think we should find it *in* water."

J. "I grant that *in* would be more forcible. But you are to show that in this connection immersion would be *impossible*. Otherwise your argument fails. To me it seems very easy to immerse, or cover up, *with* water. But after your argument, I may think differently. The whole connection makes it seem to me impossible for *baptize* to mean any thing else but

to immerse, even in this place. Verse 16, 'Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straitway *out* of the water.' He need not have gone *into* the water unless to be immersed. Mark i: 5, 'And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him *in the river* of Jordan.' How they could be poured in the river, or sprinkled in the river, I can not conceive. Could you pour or sprinkle a number of people in a river, in any sense of those words? To sprinkle or pour water and to sprinkle or pour people, seem to me very incongruous ideas. Would you use them in the same sense?"

Mr. S. "It is true that to sprinkle people in a river, and to sprinkle water upon people in a river are ideas requiring very different style of expression; but how could John have immersed the many thousands that resorted to his baptism?"

J. "Do n't leave this argument, if you please, until you heartily give it up, or endorse its absurdity. We shall never agree, unless we finish the discussion of one point at a time. If you endorse the absurdity to which it leads, you will seem to me desirous only to perplex me with vain questions, and we will drop the discussion at once."

Mr. S. "The absurdity you speak of, is that to sprinkle people in a river is the same as to scatter them in the river, as one sprinkles seeds upon a bed; well, to be frank, I see and confess the absurdity and will use the argument no more. Shall we now notice the impossibility of John's immersing so many thousands in so short a time?"

J. "Why, you just admitted that he immersed them, by declaring it absurd, that he sprinkled, or

poured them in the river. Will you argue that he did not baptize them at all? If he neither sprinkled nor poured them in the river, he must have immersed them, or not baptized them at all; so you have confessed that in this connection is found nothing against the possibility of their immersion."

Mr. S. "By no means; I will show you that, even admitting all I have admitted, they could not have been immersed for want of time. There was an immense number of them."

J. "But I tell you your effort is a dangerous one. If you prove that they were not immersed, without recalling your admissions that the water was neither sprinkled nor poured upon them, you will make the Bible contradict itself most flatly. For it says they were baptized, and you will prove they were neither sprinkled with water, nor had it poured on them, nor were themselves immersed in it. I beg you to note well this point before you make your effort. You have no right as a Christian, or a Logician, to involve things so. You have undertaken to prove it impossible that in this case the people could have been immersed, because baptized with water. Then, after acknowledging your effort vain, and being forced to admit that, if baptized at all, they were immersed, you propose to prove again that for want of time they *could not* have been immersed! Your only possible conclusion will be that the Bible lies about their being baptized at all. I repeat my warning. Yours is a dangerous effort. You had better beware!"

Mr. S. "I am embarrassed; whether confused in my own efforts to reason, or confounded by a just

force in your argument, I know not; but on this article I will proceed no further at present. I perceive you have resolved on immersion for your baptism, and I do not hope to shake you from your purpose. I have only to say that while I have not considered immersion essential to the validity of baptism, I am far from considering it wrong, and will immerse you if you desire it."

J. "Courtesy requires me to thank you for your kind proffer to immerse me; for no other mode of baptism, I think, will ever satisfy me; but may I ask the question whether, in this argument, you are entirely candid? You seem to me unwilling to acknowledge your own convictions."

Mr. S. "Well, sir, it is hard to know ourselves. I have until to-day thought myself candid when looking at this subject; but I now confess that either my candor or my reasoning is at fault. I am unwilling to decide which, until I have reviewed the whole subject in the quietude of retirement. Principle does not require the ministers of our church to argue against immersion. We practice upon its acknowledged validity all over the world by inviting immersed Christians to our Communion Table. Though we do not deem it essential, we deem it valid. I do not yield the point altogether. We have many arguments that I have not referred to yet. By some of them, I may yet demonstrate to you the truth of my position."

J. "But you have shut out every other source of argument by admitting the 'one baptism' to have been immersion in this place. Is not your reason to-day at fault?"

Mr. S. "We deny that John's baptism is Christian baptism; and even admitting that to have been immersion, we can still argue that Christian baptism was by some other mode."

J. "Your denial is very strange, since Christ fulfilled the law of his own kingdom by taking John's baptism, but over this we need not contend. You shall decide whether this new feature modifies the question in dispute: do Paul and Peter use different words in their letters to denote baptism from those employed by the Evangelists in reference to John's baptism?"

Mr. S. "They do not. They employ the same in the original, and these are translated the same way in our version. And I frankly confess the issue between us is not at all changed by this new feature. As I before said, I must, in the quietude of retirement, review our ground, and will, for the present, if you please, drop the discussion."

J. "One more suggestion let me beg you to take with you into 'the quietude of retirement.' It is whether immersion is not the mode and the only mode which all the churches consider valid, and if so, whether it should not, for that reason, if for no stronger, become the universal and only mode practiced. If of three national banks only one issues paper which is current everywhere, will not every body patronize that one?"

Mr. S. "I will remember your suggestion. Indeed it seems a good one. But I really think you would be more happy and useful in the church than out of it, and shall be myself happy to receive the promise

that you will embrace an early opportunity to discharge the duty of joining."

J. "I feel the force of what you say. I am indeed unhappy out of the church. Sunset should not again mark my delinquency, if I knew how to discharge that duty to-day. But the reminiscences of my infidelity lead me to be very careful in selecting a church. I was near losing my soul through the schisms of Christians. I am certain that every denomination can not be a church of Christ. That each one has good and bad, both doctrine and members, I doubt not. This, at all events, is true, so far as my knowledge enables me to judge. The church of Christ is only one—'my beloved is one'—and where to find that one, is yet my difficulty. Should I ever find it, I expect to be able to subscribe all its terms of membership and communion."

Mr. S. "I trust you see in our church nothing revolting to your conscience, do you?"

J. "The Bible gives me no reason to fellowship your baptism, or the infant subject to which you administer it, and therefore I am compelled to regard your church a schism."

Mr. S. "What do you mean by a *schism*?"

J. "A religious organization involving terms of membership, and communion, to which all honest Christians can not subscribe as sanctioned by God's word, without wounding their consciences. I find, for instance, no mention of infant baptism in the Bible. For that reason my conscience opposes it as a term of membership. I could not be a member of your church without sanctioning that dogma as

taught in the Bible. If after all your efforts to prove it scriptural, you fail, in the estimation of any converted person, the principle is *schismatic*. It should not be made a feature of church organization. Whatever objections I may have against it, if you can not satisfy me that it is scriptural, it would be religious tyranny to require me to submit to its incorporation in a church creed. I may object that it is not commanded, or, as in the case of infant baptism, that it tends to subvert believers' baptism altogether, and will, if ever carried out, destroy the distinction between the church and the world, by bringing all into the church without conversion."

Mr. S. "I have thought it a wise arrangement of Providence that there are so many different churches. Each one can please his own taste in joining which he prefers. And then they incite each other to purity and good works."

J. "That is a strange remark to come from one who believes the Bible. For that abounds with positive and implied injunctions to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and with cautions 'that there be no schism in the body of Christ.' Such a sentiment seems to breathe in startling and awful contrast with our Savior's last petition 'that we all may be one, *that the world may believe on him.*' Were not the subject too awfully solemn, I should again suspect you for jesting. Do, sir, revoke that sentiment, or I can not think you acknowledge the Bible to be God's book. To me it would not be a more glaring manifestation of infidelity and rebellion against God and the Bible, if one

should rejoice that there are so many thieves, liars, murderers, or blasphemers. Indeed I am not aware that these vices are any where in the Bible assigned as causes of the world's continued infidelity, while schism in Christianity is specified as an evil which must cease, *that the world may believe on Christ.*"

Mr. S. "To be frank, I had not looked at the subject before as now; but you can not surely think it possible, however desirable, that all Christians can be united in one church? The Bible does predict 'that the watchmen shall all see eye to eye and speak the same thing,' but it surely can not be realized in our day, and it would be folly for you to hope for it. Your individual position, or action, would not materially affect the case."

J. "True; an individual can do but little; but I am individually responsible to God for my conduct in the matter, and am unwilling to make still worse the evils of schism already deplorable, by joining myself to a religious faction, whose principles must forever debar from membership some of God's people. Much as I deplore the want of church privileges and sympathies, I must search a little longer for the Scripture basis of Christian union, and for its counterpart in the world—a Gospel Church. I think I have found the basis, but for fear of mistake, I will withhold my conclusion for more satisfactory confirmation. When I become convinced beyond a doubt as to what are the features of a Bible church, I will continue to inquire for the church itself until I find it. For I know it exists somewhere in the world, and ever has since its establishment. Christ said 'the gates of hell shall never prevail against

it.' Will you not assist me in looking for those features?"

Mr. S. "I feel quite satisfied with our church. People can get to heaven as well in one church as in another."

J. "Pardon me for saying it is not my sole object to get to heaven. From the time when I was led to the knowledge of the truth, I have had no hope of even aiding in my salvation. If I am saved, Christ will save me by his mercy and merit. But I love him, and am very anxious to do, in all things as he commands. In the desire of perfect obedience I find my most cheering evidences of a gracious state, and, in obedience itself, my most solid and enduring pleasures. My soul delights in the knowledge of every method by which its devotion to Christ may be acceptably expressed. If I never find the church, I humbly trust I shall get to heaven, but this confidence has no foundation in a willingness to join any thing for Christ's church which bears not its features."

Mr. S. "Don't you think your wife was a Christian and went to heaven from our church? Oh! if I can only die as she did, I shall never fear."

J. "If I can only live as she did, according to the best instruction in duty that I can get, I too shall not fear."

Mr. S. felt that he was foiled in the object of his call, and was in no very good humor. Arising to leave, said he: "But I am interrupting your studies. When you have demonstrated your basis, I will call again."

As he was making for the door, the Judge kindly

invited him not to leave until he had led them in a season of prayer. He offered a few soulless petitions, and, as he pronounced the Amen, the voice of the Judge trembling with emotion, continued to pour forth the most ardent prayer that God would remove schisms from among his people and make them one. They parted.

CHAPTER III.—*Liberality.*

Most men have their intimates. Judge Rolen's most valued friend and most influential adviser, had been, for many years, the only brother of Mrs. Rolen, whom our tears have embalmed as an early victim of disease and death. After her death, her brother, Mr. Todd, a fine scholar and polished gentleman, who had long enjoyed the confidence of the village as the principal of its high school, and was now, though past fifty, active and buoyant as a boy, seemed to fall heir to a large proportion of the affection from which its object had been removed in the death of Mrs. Rolen. To him the Judge related the principal incidents of the interview between himself and Mr. Sellers. Mr. Todd was also a Presbyterian, and having learned that the Judge had made an effort and a failure to stir up the Judge to his duty, resolved to try his influence; for he felt no little interest in having the Judge to unite with his church. He avoided introducing those points on which Mr. Sellers had found his mind so fully made up, and confined himself chiefly to the supposed impossibility of a general union of Christians.

"I understand," said he, "that you are delaying to join the Church until, by so doing, you can join all God's people at once. You must have great faith to believe that possible. I know the prophets foretell the glorious time 'when the watchmen shall all see eye to eye, and speak the same thing,' but I

have no idea it will be in our day. I suppose it is reserved for the millennial day."

J. "You might rather say it will make the millenium. But do you not sometimes pray for that time? I think I have several times heard you, in opening the Sabbath School, pray God to hasten it, and you seemed to grow warm with the petition. Now what is not of faith is sin. You surely do not introduce matter into your prayers, only to make out their length and beauty, while you do not even hope to realize what you ask? To do so is certainly to sin very solemnly. As to joining all the people of God at once, I know that is impossible. But I am unwilling even to aid in perpetuating the evils of disunion among Christians. Nothing in the history and prospects of Christianity rests so like a blight on its power to convert the world, as the division of believers into sects. Now what I desire and expect, when I become a church member, is, to occupy that platform on which all God's people can stand without sacrifice of conscience, or of principle. Then if they do not unite with me, the fault will not be mine. If I join a schism, or sect, holding terms of membership or communion, opposed to God's Word, or even not enjoined by it, from which the consciences of some Christians are compelled to revolt, I, as an individual, endorse and become responsible for all the evils of divisions among Christians. Knowing, as every Bible reader must, that God suspends the world's conversion on the union of his people, I dare not aid to the full extent of my power, and that knowingly, by joining a sect, to destroy all the souls that schisms are daily destroying,

and must continue to destroy year by year so long as schisms exist."

Mr. Todd. "Dear sir, you certainly forget that God's people are now united in that which is of all things most essential—love to God, and love to each other. I do not suppose the Bible means to forbid the existence of different denominations, but only that they should fall out and quarrel with each other, and more especially, that members of the same church should do so. Such evils are indeed deplorable."

J. "You are bound to admit that the world is not converted, and that God suspends its conversion upon the union of his people; 'that they all may be one,' prayed our Savior, 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*' This plainly means that converts can not be extensively multiplied by the preaching of the Gospel where Christians are divided, and that where they are united, sinners will not reject the Gospel. Now they do reject it very generally; you must admit either that the union required does not exist, or that Christ was mistaken when he prayed for it *'that the world might believe on him.'*"

Mr. T. "Other hindrances may delay the world's conversion—the avarice, inactivity and prayerlessness of God's people. I think you will admit that these are great hindrances, and if so, all can not be referred to the disunion of Christians."

J. "But you should remember that all these evils have an origin or cause, and since you can not show that that cause would not be removed by the union of Christians, you have no right to contend that

schisms in religion do not delay the world's conversion. Physical phenomena generally declare their causes with far greater certainty than moral sequences do theirs. Philosophy would forever fail to trace the origin of human depravity with all its woe to the eating of an apple. If a forest is prostrated, we naturally and correctly infer that a tempest has swept over it. But while thousands are swallowed up in the vortex of those moral evils which you name and classify, yet God only can expound the origin of those evils, and the causes of their perpetuity; and hence he only can prescribe for their removal. In the passage quoted I say he has centralized them all in the disunion of his people, making that the generic, while they are only the specifics; the parent stem of which they are only the ramifications. Now do you not detect the unsoundness of your objection, that the world's conversion is hindered by other things as much as by the disunion of Christians."

Mr. T. "I confess that my reasoning was unsound. I begin to fear that you will presently make me doubt everything I have hitherto believed."

J. "Another thing you might note, which is, that if you could justify your reasoning, your objection would lie not against my reasoning, but against a plain declaration of God's Word."

Mr. T. "I must then admit that the dilemma you are contending for is a fair one, and as I can not admit my Savior mistaken, I am forced to confess that the union required is still wanting. And, sir, it is to me an alarming truth. I begin to suspect myself responsible. But you surely do not believe

the union can be effected by merging all the Christians into one body? That looks, indeed, like a hopeless consummation."

J. "And yet I can not conceive its existence possible in any other way. Sects necessarily involve antagonisms. You must think your sect right. One opposed to it you must consider wrong in every opposing feature. With that you can not heartily sympathize and coöperate. To do it hypocritically is as great a sin as to pray for what you do not believe God will confer. It could not be blessed. It was, no doubt, for this reason that so few Methodists and Episcopalians became interested in the memorable meetings held here two or three years ago by Dr. Stewart. You remember how they stood back."

Mr. T. "Yes; but that was sectarian feeling. They were afraid some of their relatives, or some persons, who might else remain under their influence, would, if converted, join our church. I hate to impugn their motives, but really I can ascribe it to no better."

J. "Precisely; charity itself can conceive of no motive more noble. They believed your sect wrong and were unwilling their friends should join you. I venture the prediction now, that the Presbyterians and Episcopalians will treat, in the same way, the meeting to be held in a few days by the Methodists. You call it an evil, and say it ought not to exist, but it is one that grows out of schisms, as an unavoidable consequence. To correct it, you must destroy the schisms. As well might you dry up a stream flowing from a full fountain, as arrest and cure

these evils without removing their cause. *Ardent coöperation between opposing sects is always prompted by the worst of motives—a willingness to purchase good will by the sacrifice of principle.*”

Mr. T. “Your reasons seem clear. I only wonder I had not thought of them before. I think I feel willing to do any thing in my power to correct evils so enormous. But what can I do? Is not the platform of the Presbyterian church as scriptural, as catholic, and as unobjectionable as any can be? Could any one’s conscience be seriously hurt by joining it? None, surely none is more noble in doctrine, or in benevolent effort, or in devotion to general intelligence. I glory in almost all its features.”

J. “To be frank, I must agree with you that I know of none less liable to objections; and yet to join it would injure my conscience in several important particulars. The view I gather from the New Testament as to the character of Christ’s church, is, that it is a local, independent, congregational organization, composed of voluntary members, baptized upon a profession of their own faith. From all these features the Presbyterian church seems to differ. I also learn from history that John Calvin, about three hundred years ago, laid down the basis of Presbyterian church government, and that the structure did not reach its present state of organization until sixty or seventy years ago, when the General Assembly was established. From this last mentioned fact alone, it is evident that Presbyterianism can not be the church which our Savior established more than eighteen hundred years ago; and hence I could not

join it with the hope that all Christians would concur in selecting it for the church of Christ."

Mr. T. "Your objections against our church are entitled to a candid examination, and if you please, we will consider them in detail. I hope to remove them. I would first have you define what you mean by a congregational, independent church."

J. "One which recognizes no ecclesiastical power superior to its own, but claims and exercises within itself all the power vested in a church, of receiving and expelling members, appointing and deposing ministers; and in a word, one from whose decision, in any case of church jurisdiction, there is no appeal. Your church differs from this in the fact that it is governed by 'Ruling Elders,' and seeks the unity and coöperation of its members by the authority of supreme 'courts of review and control.' I understand that your church does not independently create its own ministry, and that from its decision any member has the right of appeal to a higher power. The New Testament churches seem to have resolved on all their acts by vote of the whole membership. The church and the ministers seem to have acted conjointly in ordaining ministers and deacons."

Mr. T. "On this point I have bestowed some thought heretofore, and while I agree with you that our church differs slightly from the New Testament order, I do not concede that we are wrong. I consider the form of government a matter of indifference, and that our form has some advantages over any other. Dr. Mosheim gives as a reason for the incompleteness of the church organization in apostolic times, that we would naturally add the needed

ordinances, and while I do not believe with him that we should be justifiable in adding or abolishing an ordinance, yet I do agree with the notion of John Calvin, that we have a right to use the ordinances changed somewhat only in their outward form; and hence I believe it not wrong that our organization differs somewhat from that laid down in the Scriptures."

J. "You admit, then, that you could not appropriate the apostle's benediction for 'keeping the ordinances *as they were delivered unto you*,' and for that reason, *all* Christians could not fellowship you. I don't wish to show that *none* can. In that case you could refute me by saying *you do*. Now will you not concede what I claim without further argument?"

Mr. T. "Most certainly. I will go further, and admit that for us to require your conscience to submit to our church government exactly as it is, would be to require what the New Testament does not; and since I admit it to be a matter of indifference, and you and others do not, I am in favor of correcting the error. Now how can this be done?"

J. "Your question develops more clearly than I could do, the force of another objection I have against your form of government, that, not being independent, you can correct no error that it may involve. To alter one of its features, you must convince of the error not only your own congregation, but your whole Presbytery, your Synod, and your General Assembly. You have no remedy but to effect that mighty work, or to renounce Presbyterianism itself. I defy you to show any thing else pos-

sible in the case. Were your government congregational, the evil might be reached; but now I think it can not."

Mr. T. "I confess the difficulty. It seems, as you say, impossible to reform an error in our church. But as I had not thought of this before, you must not insist upon my taking immediately the other horn of your dilemma and leaving the church. I should have to think a long time before taking that step. You made an allusion to the late date of our origin as a church. Tell me, in candor, do you allege that as an objection against Presbyterianism?"

J. Indeed I do. Of itself it is enough to vitiate its claim to be the church of Christ; for his church was organized in the apostles' days, and, though I know not which or where it is, it must have existed ever since; for he said, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"

Mr. T. "We do not claim to be *the* church of Christ, but only one of its *branches*."

J. "The Bible speaks nothing of its branches. The branches of a court would be an idea as intelligible as the branches of a church. If the church has branches, the whole church must be bound by the acts of each branch, and there must be harmony, or the branches will all be broken off. Because of this want of harmony in actions, the different churches are all separated from each other. Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Lutheranism were all expelled from Romanism, and their founders anathematized as heretics; were they not? and was not Methodism cut off from Episcopacy because of its supposed heresy in faith and practice? It must be

a singular tree whose branches are so numerous and so dissimilar. My dear sir, you will have to abandon this branch notion."

Mr. T. "Not so fast; for while these churches externally differ, they may be one in heart. Indeed they must be, in the sense our Savior's prayer required, unless you will take the strange position that his prayer for this oneness has not been answered."

J. "It would be no more strange than if I should take the position that his prayer for their sanctification or for their glorification has not been answered; do you think it would?"

Mr. T. "Well, no; I suppose not."

J. "Then I will take the position that they *may* not be one even in heart: 'Out of the heart are the issues of life.' If their hearts were one, their acts would be. I trust you will give up this branch argument. It is not creditable to your intellect or to your cause."

Mr. T. "Well, sir, if it had been original with me, I suppose I should myself have detected its defects; but I confess I took it as I found it. I now have very little reason to believe a faulty organization can be the church of Christ, and hold myself ready to join you when you find one entirely faultless. But I should like your sanction to the proposition that if you do not find it in a reasonable length of time, you will join us."

J. "Were it a matter of mere courtesy involved, I should be very happy to reciprocate the compliment; but ever since I gave up my infidelity, it has been a maxim with me to act in religion only from a sense of duty. To join for the church of Christ

what I clearly conceive to be no such thing, only for the sake of a friend, would be a great deviation from that principle."

Mr. T. "You are quite right; and if I had duly weighed the moral of my proposal, I should not have made it. As I shall be uneasy henceforward until you find and identify the church, what would you advise me to do?"

J. "Why, sir, you are as much bound to look for that church as I am. I would advise you to lose no time in delay."

Mr. T. "But the whole thing is new to me. I don't know how to look, nor where. What progress have you made? What principle of search shall we adopt? As you have studied the subject a good deal, you have no doubt matured it to some extent."

J. "I am not yet fully decided as to my own duty. That Christ's church somewhere in the world exists, I doubt not, because he established it, and said 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' I think the act of establishing it, was to lay down the laws for its government, and to appoint its officers. I have already told you what I suppose to be a church. Its officers I think are preachers and deacons. The preachers are to display the laws of Christ's commonwealth or kingdom, as aided by the whole church located in any place—they preach the Gospel and administer Baptism to believers, and the Supper to the churches. The deacons seem to have care of the temporalities of the churches. These, as well as the ministers, are appointed by election in their own churches. The point of difficulty with me is how to become a qualified church member.

Mr. Sellers has agreed to immerse me; but I know not whether his act would be valid, as he has never been immersed, and is not himself a church member, and does not even believe in immersion. I fear such an act in him would be a damning sin; for I wish it done in the name of the Holy Godhead. Even if he believed in it, I should think his not being a member of a Gospel church, nor authorized to administer it, would render the act invalid. For except the Apostles, who were put into the ministry by direct appointment of Christ, in person, we read of no New Testament ministry, but those set apart by Gospel churches. Their call and ordination seem a sufficient guarantee that they act by divine appointment, when such call is extended by a Gospel church. I have not decided, but have thought best to convince some Christian, that the portraiture of a church I have briefly drawn for you is Scriptural, and then get him to immerse me, and in turn, I would immerse him. We should then be a Gospel church except the doubtful character of our immersions. Before resorting to that suspected step, however, I have determined to call as general a meeting as I can by an advertisement in the village paper, and, after giving a full exposition of my religious views, I will inquire if any present can tell of a church holding such sentiments. If information of such a church is obtained, I will go and join it; if not, I shall be driven to the expedient just mentioned, of trying to get some one convinced to baptize me."

Mr. T. "I am deeply interested in what you say, but I have been seriously revolving in mind whether

I could consent to be immersed. I have so seldom heard of it except from the Campbellites, that I have learned to associate it with the rottenness of their system. But I suppose it would not be right to neglect a scripture duty because they advocate its importance, and they have long since convinced me that, if mode is essential to the validity of baptism, immersion should be practiced. But I am far from agreeing that mode is at all essential."

CHAPTER IV.—*Light.*

THE town of L—— had been for several days alive with excitement. The Methodists were protracting a meeting. A large number had given the hand as seekers, thus pledging themselves if ever they should become Christians, to join the Methodist church, and not a few had professed conversion. Preachers, class-leaders and members had had one season of rejoicing after another, until shouting had become quite common. The order-loving Presbyterians were afraid there was more excitement than religious intelligence in the work, and for the most part stood aloof. The Reformers deemed it pious to pass it off with ridicule. The Episcopalians treated it with dignified apathy.

As the crowd dispersed on Saturday noon, after a very animated meeting, Mr. Todd, at the head of near forty school girls, was joined in his homeward walk by Mr. Sellers, who made use of his undoubted welcome by giving assurance that he was going to escort him and his girls home to dinner. "It is quite time you should," rejoined Mr. Todd, with a hearty smile of welcome; "for you have kept yourself quite aloof of late. I notice you have generally attended the meetings. Have you formed an opinion as to their probable influence?" Having quickened their pace, so as to be a few steps in advance of the girls, Mr. Sellers replied: "We have had some good preaching, and some great efforts to sustain what you and I consider dangerous error, as falling from grace, the reception of seekers, etc. Upon the

whole, though I doubt not some good has been done, and many have been converted, I fear the meeting will do as much harm as good. Indeed, I can not say I have attended it from the best of motives. Your brother-in-law, the Judge, has the idea that we are a sectarian people, and sometime ago predicted that we would take no interest in the Methodist meeting. I hoped, if he could see his prediction fail, his prejudices would so far be overcome that he would yet join our church, instead of wasting a useful life in pursuit of something that I am persuaded does not exist. But I have not felt heartily prayerful for the success of the meeting, in the direction it has taken. I fear it will lead many to trust in unreal excitement, and leave others confirmed in infidelity."

"I heartily sympathize with your fears," said Mr. Todd, drawing a deep sigh. "I fear the main object is to get the whole community, both the converted and the unconverted, pledged to Methodism. I never knew a system, political or religious, to display more demagoguery. It has a plea for every character, and can scarcely extend its prayers or efforts to those who will not join. Were you present the evening the minister gave in detail the reasons why persons desiring religion should join the church?"

Mr. Sellers. "No; I was not present that evening, but I feel curious to hear them. I may think better of the practice, when I hear the reasons for it."

Mr. T. "I doubt whether you will. '*First*,' said he, 'we will take a deeper interest in you than now. We will consider you one of us, and pray for you more. We will take you to the class-meetings, and talk

with you both publicly and privately. *Secondly*, we can give you a great many examples of persons who have succeeded in getting religion, either in, or immediately after, taking that solemn step. In the session of Conference, last year, one of the ministers proposed to inquire how many of the preachers then present had joined the church before conversion, and it was found that out of six hundred, more than two-thirds gave their testimony on this point.' These are substantially his reasons. Could any thing be better calculated to catch those who think superficially? He took special pains to keep them posted as to one glorious privilege they would still have, viz.: that they could quit the church at the end of six months, if they did not like it. For my own part, I should not have attended the meetings with my boarders, if I had not taken occasion to caution them against the dangers of the system."

Mr. S. "You have rightly judged that I would like the practice no better for hearing the reasons for it. The English of those reasons is, 'if you will all be Methodists we will pray for you. If not, we have no sympathy for you.'"

Mr. T. "You were speaking of the Judge; has he given any encouragement to the hope that he will join our church?"

"I have not spoken with him on the subject for several weeks," replied Mr. Sellers, as they entered the parlor, and were seated. "I thought best to leave him alone until his whims should be somewhat sobered down, and have heard no more of his peculiar notions since the conversation, of which I gave you an account about a month ago. You may re-

member he thought he could find, somewhere in the world, a church in which all God's people can unite. What a strange idea for a man of his sense!"

"I have been more of your opinion than I am at present, Mr. Sellers," said he; "but let us discuss the matter a little. The Judge is undoubtedly a sensible, honest and pious man; and we seldom meet with a preacher who understands the Bible more than half so well. I have had a long conversation with him on this subject, and I think you would be surprised to hear the strength of his reasons. He has almost made a convert of me, and if we can not contrive to win him over, I fear he will carry me with him."

"Carry you where?" said Mr. Sellers, as if too incredulous to be astonished at the remark. "He will hardly carry any one until he finds a lighting place for himself, I guess."

"His positions, Mr. Sellers, have won my serious respect, and I have been considering them about as long as it has been since you talked with the Judge."

"Are you serious?" asked Mr. Sellers, somewhat surprised.

"Indeed I am," replied Mr. Todd, with the calmness of settled determination.

"I had thought you a man of more reliable firmness," said Mr. S., growing somewhat more surprised, but still thinking a few taunts would reclaim him.

"I respectfully decline the honor of being firm in manifest error," said Mr. T. "I hope you don't think me so."

Mr. S. "No, by no means; but you do not seriously concede that you are wrong, do you?"

Mr. T. "If we can not convince the Judge we are right, I shall think so."

Mr. S. "Why, you surprise me. Do you think the Judge infallible?"

Mr. T. "Not at all; but I believe him a Christian, and that no Christian can have insuperable objections against joining God's church. God requires all Christians to live in his church; and if after the most faithful and earnest efforts to convince him that our church has the divine organization, and the ordinances enjoined in the New Testament; or if when convinced, he refuses to submit, I shall either be forced to doubt his piety, or the scripturality of our church. I do not believe it possible for one to be reconciled to God, and yet to have an irreconcilable aversion to his church. If ours is his church, we surely can prove it to every Christian who inquires for the evidences of that fact."

Mr. S. "Have you said any thing to him which may vitiate our effort to convince him?"

Mr. T. "I have been forced to concede that our church government is not strictly scriptural, and that the Bible says nothing about infant membership. On these two points you will have to convince me, and when you succeed, I will cordially give you all the aid I can to convince him both in these and in other things. Till then I dare not plead for our church at all."

"As to church government," said Mr. Sellers, "that is a matter of mere temporal policy, and not worth a serious argument any way. We can establish such as we please. God has not told us what particular form to adopt. The system we have is

the result of much wisdom ; and experience shows it well adapted to the efficiency, unity, and purity of the church. Any form being generally adopted, a change should be avoided as the cause of much trouble and expense."

"Has not told us what particular form to adopt?" said Mr. Todd, with apparent astonishment. "Your remark seems to me to deny the divine organization of the church. But you surely do not mean that?"

"O, no ; I only mean that the externals of the church are left to our choice."

"What do you mean by 'externals?' Do you mean the terms of membership and the origin of ordaining powers?"

"No. They are prescribed in the Bible. If these were of human device, the church would indeed be a human organization. I only mean the form of government, as congregational, provincial, or national."

"I understand you. Your church is not congregational, because each congregation is not invested with all the ecclesiastical power your denomination claims and exercises. I consider it either provincial or national. You speak of it as 'The Presbyterian church of the United States.' Now, sir, does not the New Testament clearly speak of the churches of Jerusalem, Galatia, Ephesus, Thyatira, etc., as if they were independent or congregational? Were the New Testament church organization a provincial one, it would seem more natural and less calculated to mislead, if the Testament should speak of it as the church of Judea, the church of Asia Minor, the church of Galatia, etc. Do you not think so?"

"In candor, I do. But even admitting ours a provincial or national church, what is the valid objection? Does not our form secure the objects of a church as well as any other?"

"For argument's sake I will admit that it does; and still my objection is a good one. In matters of mere human policy, you can not get all Christians to agree; and if you can assign no higher motive to unity than mere expediency, you will have as great a variety of organization as of taste; but the taste of all Christians would yield to the known obligation of a divine establishment. If therefore you could prove your form of government even better than that enjoined by example in the New Testament—which modesty should forbid you try—it could not be universally adopted, and would prevent the general union of Christians. We can not prove to all Christians that the form of government is immaterial or indifferent. If they object to our following the Bible too closely, the fault will not be ours; but if they truthfully allege that our tenets are unscriptural, we are schismatics, if we do not renounce them, and adopt such as are scriptural. If only one feature of the kind be retained, it renders each member of the church holding it responsible for all evils of schism; do you not think so?"

"Well, sir, I suppose I will have to agree with you." With this admission Mr. Sellers discovered great embarrassment. But he was talking to one of his own brethren, and was much relieved by that fact.

"If so," replied Mr. Todd, "I need scarcely tell you that I can not conscientiously remain a mem-

ber. If I do, I shall be responsible for all the evils of schism, and I deem them awful beyond the power of man to compute."

Mr. S. "Well, if I had no other objection than that, I would never think of leaving a church. Do you think you can ever find another church so little liable to objection?"

Mr. T. "You overlook my objection against Infant membership."

Mr. S. "Well, that is one of the dearest rites in our church, and I still hope you are really not skeptical about that."

"Indeed," said Mr. Todd, "I have thought as favorably of it as any member in our church, and have proved it by having my six children baptized. A happier day I never witnessed than that on which our first was consecrated to the church, unless that happiness has since been surpassed in similar acts of pious devotion to that sentiment of our denomination. Two of those children, I trust, are now in heaven; but still, if we can not prove the baptism of infants scriptural, we should not retain it. If we do, we shall be in favor of schism."

"Well, do you not honestly believe it scriptural?"

"I do not *now*, since I have seriously examined it. Nor could I now feel happy in submitting a child to be baptized. If, however, there is any scripture for the practice, it will immediately, on being adduced, remove my objection and reconcile me to the doctrine. For I confess I love the practice, and can see no wrong in it except so far as not being proved scriptural it will constitute a barrier to the union of

Christians. Judge Rolan has routed me from all the arguments I have ever relied on to justify it."

Mr. S. "Did not baptism come in place of circumcision?"

Mr. T. "I once thought so, but do not now. Circumcision has never given place to any thing. God said it should be to the Jews 'a perpetual rite throughout all their generations.' They still retain it. It is, and ever has been, their title to the land of Canaan. If baptism took its place, why should believing thousands of the Jews whose males had all been circumcised, have been required, on the day of Pentecost, to be baptized? and why should Timothy, who had been baptized, be required to be circumcised? And how can you, by your mode of argument, evince the title of infant females to baptism, or reject baptized infants from the Lord's Supper, which is the Christian Passover?"

"Well," said *Mr. S.*, in manifest impatience, "if you deny the succession of baptism to circumcision, I can not reason with you. This always has been our starting point, and when it is denied, I know not what to say. I could trace the analogy between the Jewish and the Christian churches, as our authors on this subject have done to my satisfaction, but I see from what you have said, that you are fortified beyond the possibility of conviction, and I know not what to say."

Mr. T. "Well, sir, I will tell you what will convince me; just show me one Bible text in which it is said that circumcision should, or did, give place to baptism, and I pledge myself to give up my ob-

jection ; and if I don't do it, I will educate all your children without charge. Come, sir, is not that a fair proposal ? ”

Mr. S. “ We do not claim any scripture to prove directly that baptism came in the room of circumcision. We draw our arguments from analogy. The inference is logically necessary. If infants were made members of the Jewish church by circumcision, and baptism is the door into the Christian Church, while the Bible says nothing to forbid the introduction of infants, it seems fairly inferable that infants must, by the same law, be received, through baptism, into the church now. Do you not think so ? ”

Mr. T. “ I have thought so ; but I have several objections to your inference, which I hope you will let me state in detail. They convince me not that infant baptism is wrong, for this I do not yet believe, and never may ; but that the arguments on which our authors rely to prove it, are inconclusive. I hope you will remember that I am not opposing infant baptism itself, but on the supposition that it is right, I do not believe our mode of argument does the subject justice. I have brought to bear on Judge Rolan's mind all our published arguments, and with all the force I could, but he very easily turns every one of them against us. I wish to point out the deficiencies, and then if we can, we will remedy them. ”

Mr. S. “ Did I not fairly understand you as giving up infant baptism ? ”

Mr. T. “ To be frank, I did say so ; but it was with much reluctance, and while confused by a con-

viction of the absurdities proved and charged upon our arguments by the Judge. It is an after thought with me to try to remedy those defects and yet make out the proof of our doctrine. I am still in favor of proving it if possible, though it would place me in an awkward light before the Judge."

Mr. S. "Indeed it would. To avow your belief of a truth, and then after giving all your reasons, and being forced to admit them no reasons at all, it would develop a strong suspicion of prejudice, or sinister motive, if you should again avow that belief. Still it would alter the case, if you should sustain your view by other arguments than those you had adduced. It would indeed prove your candor; do you not think so?"

Mr. T. "You are right, and I am obliged for the suggestion. It would show that I am willing to yield to the force of truth, and I shall not be ashamed to resume my once surrendered position. We will then review our arguments, each of us with the same purpose, viz.: of detecting any deficiency they may involve, and of remedying the same."

Mr. S. "In this I am happy to join you. Please state first those arguments which to you seem inconclusive."

Mr. T. "The succession of baptism to circumcision seems to me without proof, and our opponents think us unfair in asking them first to admit this inference without any direct proof, and then to admit the other inference drawn from the supposed validity of this, *that if baptism came in place of circumcision, infants are to be baptized.*"

Mr. S. "I see. They deem it unfair to deduce one

inference from another; and in that they are certainly correct. It is then a question of fact: *Do we infer this succession, or do we prove it?*"

Mr. T. "Precisely; we are challenged to prove it by a scripture text, and I know of no such text. Our authors profess to give none. The inference, thus unsustained by Scripture, is opposed by the facts, as before remarked, that circumcision among the Jews never has ceased, nor given place to any thing else—that the circumcised, our Savior himself, and the converted thousands in Judea, were all required, both men and women, to be baptized—that Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess, was required by Paul to be circumcised even after baptism—that Titus, who was a Gentile, was positively and obstinately prevented by Paul from being circumcised. It is contended that, if baptism took the place of circumcision, both should never have been administered to the same subject. Here, then, is a flaw in our argument, which I know not how to mend. Do you?"

Mr. Sellers, after pausing for several moments and walking to the table for a drink of water, replied: "That is quite a serious flaw indeed. I had not noticed it before. I see no way to remedy it. All logicians are required to start from an established proposition, or from a self-evident truth. If they do not, they produce nothing but sophistry. But, as you say, we are wont to ask our opponents to grant our fundamental proposition, which is the very thing they deny. All the arguments drawn from it must be pointless and inconclusive, unless we first establish it by Scripture. This, I concede, never has been done, so far as I am informed."

Mr. T. "That you may have the whole matter before you, I will remark further, that if we succeed in establishing by Scripture our starting point, still our inference, in regard to infant membership, will prove tortured or illegitimate. If baptism does supplant circumcision, then it follows, *First*, that males only are to be baptized. *Secondly*, that all the males, bond or free, in every family, whose head is a member of the church, will have to be baptized, whether born in the family or bought with money. *Thirdly*, all the baptized must be considered qualified communicants, because all the circumcised were required to partake of the Jewish Passover. Now we baptize only the white children of believing parents, and of both sexes, and deny the right even of these to come to the Lord's table before they voluntarily profess their own faith in Christ. In mending the deficiency in our argument, we must have regard to this point also. Our arguments from household baptisms I find equally inconclusive. In every instance you will find some incidental testimony that all the members of those households were believers. The jailer's family 'rejoiced believing in God.' Into Lydia's house the apostles entered, 'and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.' The household of Cornelius all received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized. They of Stephanus 'addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.' So that this source of proof also needs to be carefully examined."

Mr. S. "It would, as you suggest, be needless to labor these points until our premises are established. But I declare I do not like to examine this subject,

and would rather leave it to wiser heads and abler hands. I can not trust my own conclusions when they oppose the views of so many wise, learned, and pious men as may be supposed to have made and defended our confession of faith. Let us drop the subject."

Mr. T. "You can do as you please, but being individually responsible to God for what I believe and profess, I am resolved to base my faith and practice in nothing but his known will. My eyes were lately opened to the awful truth that for me to belong to a schismatic church, or one holding just one term of membership and communion, which any Christian is compelled, after a most honest and faithful examination of God's word, to reject as unscriptural, would be for me to hold myself responsible for all the crushing evils of disunion among Christians; and this I can not do. I would rather belong to no church than to one holding a schismatic principle."

Mr. S. "What do you mean by a church holding a principle?"

Mr. T. "A term of church organization is a church principle. A private principle is not a term of communion. The perseverance of believers is, with us, a church principle. If one would join us before he has Bible knowledge enough to believe that, he has either to belie his soul by declaring his belief of it, or refuse to join us. For it is in the book which professes to declare the faith of all the members. An evil of making this a *church* principle is, that its unbeliever is forced to join a church where he is pledged and bound, by an opposite church principle, never to believe it: and hence all his researches on

the point are to disprove it. Here is the origin of the fierce antagonisms in which schisms are so fruitful. They result from the canonization of our views as church principles. The view just mentioned would be a private sentiment, if it were not a part of the church constitution."

"From this, I suppose you are a sort of Campbellite, and oppose all creeds," said Mr. S., with a manner which declared him rather indifferent as to the influence of his remark; for he was at the end of his strength, and his opponent fresh and vigorous as when they commenced.

"I am not so much opposed to a creed itself, as to a *schismatic* creed," said Mr. Todd. "I know none more truly schismatic than the Campbellites, though they abjure all creeds. I should think it eminently schismatic to have no creed. I want a creed which all evangelical denominations will pronounce sound in all its features; one whose mode, subject, and design of baptism, whose government and communicant shall all be acknowledged scriptural by every candid Christian Bible reader. Having such, I am sure I should not be a schismatic; nor should I be ashamed of any name which might be applied to me."

"Where did you get all these new-fangled notions any how?" asked Mr. Sellers, as if awaking out of a listless stupor, and determined to give his opponent a polite hearing; "a strange spell has come over you."

"They were forced upon my consideration by Judge Rolan," said Mr. T., as if conscious that he ought to have perceived them without a suggestion.

"The more I think on them the clearer becomes the sense of duty to do all I can to heal the schisms in the body of Christ."

"I suppose, then, you have made up your mind to leave us and become a close communionist," rejoined Mr. Sellers, with a sneer of indignation, as they were invited to dinner. Mr. Sellers was seated near Mrs. Todd, who, after the usual compliments, commenced in a suppressed voice: "You look as if you had heard some bad news, Mr. Sellers. They've all got into a very strange way here in the last two weeks, but I want you to know I am not moved. I'll stand by you, if the last one of them forsakes you. Have you seen this week's *Morning Star*, containing Judge Rolen's advertisement?"

"I have not heard of it. What is it?" asked he with concern.

"John, my son, turn to it, and read it while the boarders are collecting."

"TO THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC.

"The writer has been, for many years, a wicked and confirmed Infidel. Nearly three years ago, the Author of all mercy was pleased to subdue my proud speculations by the sudden and painful removal of my amiable and pious companion. I became, from that time, a man of prayer. God has blessed me with a hope in Christ, and I have ever since desired to become a church member. Deeming it a matter of great importance for every Christian to join the true church of Christ; and fully convinced by his many expressed and implied requisitions for all his people to be one, that he has authorized but one church or-

ganization; and believing the Bible to teach that the world's conversion is suspended on the union of Christians, I have spent nearly three years in studying only the Bible, to learn what the church is, and how to become a member. These things are now clear in the light of the Bible. I believe Christ's church exists somewhere in the world, because he established it, and said 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' But I am unable to recognize its features in any religious society with which I am acquainted. I therefore name the first Thursday in next month (October), being just three years from the day I became hopeful of God's mercy, and request a convention of God's people to be held in the Reformers' meeting-house of this place, commencing at 10 o'clock A. M. and holding from day to day, until we can define and agree upon the Scripture features of a church, and form one in this community. To the lovers of Jesus this proclamation is humbly made in the name of Him who prayed 'that we all may be one as himself and his Father, *that the world may believe.*' I will address the audience before we go into business.

"September 3.

ALFRED ROLAN."

The blessing was asked, the meal dispatched in silence and haste, and Mr. Todd and Mr. Sellers being again seated in the parlor, resumed their conversation as follows:

Mr. Todd. "I should like to know what you meant by saying you supposed I was ready to become a close communionist. I have ever had the greatest horror of being one. I never will be, and know it

at the same time. The sin of restricting Christian communion is, in my opinion, if not unpardonable, most injurious to the cause of Christ. If I leave the Presbyterians, I never can join a church until after the fullest assurance of its freedom from that error. Do my principles seem to tend that way? and how?"

Mr. S. "You seemed rather inclined to the principles of the strict Baptists, and I began to fear you might, in your great zeal, become one. If you go on as you seem disposed, I still expect it."

Mr. T. "Far from that, I assure you. I was raised near one of their churches. They thought no one good enough to meet them at the Lord's table but their own members, and would never commune with others. I despised that feature in them, though they were good people."

Mr. S. "When you were talking about not fellowshiping our church government, and mode, and subject of baptism, it sounded to me a good deal like them."

Mr. T. "You do me some injustice in saying I refused to fellowship our subject, and mode; I said nothing about mode, and only said though I was partial to infant baptism, I was unwilling to have it enforced without a Bible warrant, so as to hurt the consciences of those who could not fellowship it. I believe the Baptists are almost as close-communication as we are."

Mr. S. "As we are! What do you mean?"

Mr. T. "I mean to say that in the strict sense of the word, our church is close in communion."

Mr. S. "O, I know we don't commune with our

infant members; but that sophism has been exposed too often to be alleged by one of your intelligence."

Mr. T. "Persons of greater intelligence than I, and equal honesty, are still of opinion it is no 'sophism;' but that is not what I mean. I mean that our communion table is circumvented by barriers insuperable to the conscientious approach of thousands of God's people. They *can not* come without murder to their consciences. The whole denomination of Baptists, except a few, who would sell principle and conscience for popularity, are, by their professedly candid sentiment, compelled to dis-fellowship our mode, subject and design of baptism, as well as our government. Now, if their objections against either of these are valid, we are close in our communion, so long as we retain it as a church principle."

Mr. S. "Do n't you think that speech shows a tender regard for the strict Baptists? Indeed I think you will yet join them. But that by the way—we don't ask them to fellowship our church, nor our constitution, nor any principle we hold. We only ask an expression of that fellowship which they profess for us as the children of the same Heavenly Father. It is *stubbornness* that they refuse."

Mr. T. "In frankness, I do think better of the Baptists since I have discovered some of our own faults, and if we could see our own faults generally, we should love our neighbors better; but I was only speaking of the Baptists for an illustration. We may not ask them to indorse our church; but as the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, they conscientiously feel that, in partaking with us, they

would, in effect, publicly pronounce us a church. But they regard us a *schism*; and so *now* do I. In this they reason exactly as you did a few weeks ago with Mr. Poore, to show him that Christians could not attend dances without, in effect, endorsing them. If they commune with us, they certainly bid us God speed, and in effect, indorse our schismatic principles. It is not very charitable to call it *stubbornness*."

Mr. S. "I have no better name for it. Do we not acknowledge them a church? If they had charity as a grain of mustard seed, they might return the courtesy."

Mr. T. "We may not be influenced so much by charity as by veracity in this. Could any imaginable amount of charity induce you to pronounce your neighbor honest, if you knew him to be a thief? The reason we acknowledge them a church is because we know their mode, subject and design of baptism, and their communicant, and church government are all valid. They can not truthfully say so much of ours. We act on the same principle. The Quakers reject baptism, and we refuse to commune with them, and to invite them to commune with us, because we can not endorse that feature in their church. Reflection makes me more and more incline to the Baptists."

Mr. S. "I have known some of our ministers and members to say they would commune with the Quakers."

Mr. T. "Only for an argument against the Baptists—an act too wicked for you or me, and you should not seek the influence of such a profession,

even if it helped to defend the truth and the right. The cause that has to be sustained by arguments drawn from a wicked practice is to be suspected—perhaps I should say, abandoned.”

Mr. S. “I confess the wrong, and, as forced to do, admit your argument, that we act on the same principle with the Baptists. For the first time in my life, I see that the Baptists are, in the strict sense of the word, open communionists, and we are not. I see also that some churches are nearer open communionists than others. Those which have the greatest number of schismatic church principles are the most restricted. How strange I had not noticed this before! We have *four* schismatic principles—*Infant membership, the design of baptism to infants, pouring for baptism, and our church organization.*”

Mr. T. “Yes; and you might add one more: Our church indorses all denominations, right or wrong, by its promiscuous invitation to all to commune with us. If I can not commune with a Campbellite at his own table, I can not at ours nor any other table. If we had no schismatic principle but this, we should, by the nature of our invitation, indorse and bid God speed to all schisms, and every one who should accept our invitation would do likewise.”

Mr. S. “I see it; and this changes the whole method of discussing the communion question. I now see that to find an open communion church, we must find one with no schismatic principle. We have *five*. The Methodists have how many? *An aristocratic government; three baptisms; infant subjects; apostacy; a human origin;* but so have we; and I can scarcely tell what. I believe they have

as many as a church possibly can have, to be evangelical. Well, sir, I am confused," said Mr. S., with a mingled expression of apparent candor and disregard to his unpleasant dilemma; "I dare not, as a minister of God, be the organ of a schism. Would he not curse my ministry with perpetual barrenness? I think I shall go to Virginia, and join 'the sect everywhere spoken against'—the Baptists."

"Better have done with your taunts about the Baptists," said Mr. Todd, in a good humored manner; "and be serious. These are not matters of jest."

"Indeed," said Mr. S., "I was more than half in earnest. I do think your reasoning all in favor of the strict Baptists, and I believe, if I leave our church, I shall join them."

Mr. T. "I doubt whether you would be bettered by such a step. After much deliberation on the subject in conversation with Judge Rolen, I approve of the plan suggested in his advertisement, viz.: to form a church strictly on scriptural principles."

Mr. S. "But then would not that have a human origin like ours?"

Mr. T. "No, not 'like ours.' It would have a Bible constitution, and a membership of Divine appointment."

Mr. S. "But none of us could administer baptism; for we are not in such a church. Do you suppose my act would derive any validity from my being a Presbyterian minister? Would it be more valid than yours as a Presbyterian layman, or even Judge Rolen's, who is a member of no church?"

Mr. T. "By no means. A baptism by the author-

ity of a schism could not be valid. But it seems to me the case would be different if you or I, as a convert from a schism to a strict observance of Christ's law in the formation of a church, should baptize each other. It would be an act by divine appointment, because wholly in obedience to a divine law. In countries where there are Baptists, the Methodists and other denominations that ordinarily sprinkle their subjects, immerse a great proportion of those who join them. But even these immersions being acknowledged invalid because administered not in obedience to Christ, but to perpetuate schisms, I could yet contend for the validity of ours, if performed out of pure regard to Christ's will. For in his sight the intent is more regarded than the act itself. But after all, I confess I have some misgivings on this point. I believe, with the Judge, that the true church exists, and that we shall yet find and identify it before we are driven to the necessity of forming one involving a principle to be at all suspected."

Mr. S. had now, contrary to his own manifest intentions, become quite serious. Whether he hoped by a show of candor to win Mr. Todd over, by reasoning him into a consequence of his principles from which he knew he had once recoiled with disgust, viz.: a similarity to the Baptists; or seriously intended, for the time, to be candid for the future, the reader may judge. But after a short pause, "What doubts," inquired Mr. S., "have you that the Baptists are the true church? I have been thinking of them as holding, according to your views, no principle manifestly schismatic."

Mr. T. "I know very little about them. My parents, I remember, used to despise and abuse their illiberality, bigotry, ignorance, and exclusiveness, until I never desired an intimate acquaintance with them. I have an hereditary dislike to the very name and can not tolerate the idea that they are the true church. I may be prejudiced, and will not censure without knowing more about them."

Mr. S. "I have been educated to entertain for them no partiality myself, and I do not suppose, although I suggested it, that they are the true church. But I have quite an intimate acquaintance with them. Your principles are very nearly the same as theirs."

Mr. T. "That may be. But I shall be far from abandoning them even if they do hold them."

Mr. S. "It now occurs to me what we had best do. Let us remain where we are, and get our church, if we can, to abandon her schismatic principles. Shall we not then be a true church?"

Mr. T. "If ours were a congregational church, we might hope to do that; but it is national, and we might as well hope to reform a nation at once. I deem nothing practicable, but to renounce Presbyterianism, just as the sinner renounces his sins when he accepts Christ."

Mr. S. "It is true we can not reform the whole communion, but we can, as the church in L—, absolve ourselves from all connection with the Synod, and be, like some Methodist churches, independent. Then we can drop infant membership. We shall then be relieved of three schismatic principles. As for the mode of baptism, we may receive no others but by immersion. Should we not then be free from schism?"

Mr. T. "If in addition to these changes, we can resolve to hold church communion with no schism, I see not but we should then be a Bible church, with the exception that we should all, for a good while, be unbaptized. You know all our children have been baptized by pouring, and I, for one, could not be easy to live in a church which many good Christians could not join, because of that feature. It seems to me we should all have to be immersed. Nothing less would suffice all Christians, and hence nothing less would suffice me."

"If so," said Mr. S., with apparent warmth, "you may count me off your list. I never expect to be immersed. Your own reasoning in another case, a few minutes ago, shall plead my justification in refusing. 'The *intention* characterizes the action.' My baptism was with a right intention."

Mr. T. "Don't be excited, Mr. Sellers; I think you will yet be immersed, if you find it to be your duty? And if you have no other ground to justify your refusal but 'my reasoning in another case,' you will have to be immersed; for you were baptized wholly *without intention, intelligence or conscience, in unconscious infancy*. I fear your main trouble is pride of character, and that your long and public devotion to Presbyterianism can not easily be overcome even by the consciousness of duty. We all deplore a change of our public sentiments; and ministers, perhaps, more than other people. For my part, I know not what to become; but I am no longer a Presbyterian. If to-morrow were our communion, I could not partake."

Mr. S. "Let me admonish *you*, not to be hasty.

Had we not better continue as a church until we can form one? We had better have *some* sort of a church than *none at all*."

Mr. T. "I see not why. I think we had better, far better have *none* than a sham church. If ours is not the true church, we dare not arrogate to ourselves the right to celebrate the Lord's Supper, or to administer his baptism. We have no more right to do either than a company of Mormons, Masons, Sons of Temperance, Abolitionists, or any other human society. Their objects, as societies, may all be good; but they have no right to God's ordinances, while they are not God's churches. It is just as clear that if we are the true church, so as to have a right to these ordinances at all, we dare not change. Hence I conclude we had better have *no church* than an impure or false one. To know that a church is not right is enough to oblige me to leave it without delay. I shall then feel the obligation to identify and join the true church as soon as possible."

Mr. Sellers, up to this time, had entertained a faint hope of reclaiming Mr. Todd. That hope had now vanished; but he resolved to try another expedient. To save him he had resorted to every means consistent with truthfulness, except this; and from his knowledge of Mr. Todd's character, he had but little hope of its success. "Who," said Mr. Sellers, "will fill your place in the Academy, if you abandon our church? The Institution is denominational, you know, and can have no incumbent but a Presbyterian. I trust you will consider well before you resolve."

"Your suggestion," said Mr. Todd, looking very serious, as if affected almost to tears, "brings melancholy to my soul. My happiness and my vocation are, to a great extent, united. I am, it is true, not dependent for a support upon my labors; but I could scarcely live without the luxury of useful labor. But dearly as I love my calling, when a sense of Christian duty requires its loss, the sacrifice, I think, will give me pleasure. I however shall have the pleasure of not being alone, if discountenanced by my former patrons and friends on account of my change in sentiment. Truth will have friends. Our 'new-fangled notions' have not a few, even now, both in the school and in the community. Messrs. Theus and Snider have made up their minds to be Presbyterians no longer. Three of the teachers, beside myself, and about fifteen of the scholars, have formed the same resolve. Most of these have been converted in the effort to show me my error. As Judge Rolan has been assailed by a greater number, and has pleaded the cause with more mature ability, it is not in my power to tell what is the state of your church. I doubt whether a corporal's guard will be left you, when the Judge has made his selection. I hate to grieve you, but I think you will find matters as I have told you."

Mr. S. now seemed really distressed. "Are these things true?" asked he, as he arose and commenced walking the floor. "I have not known you to joke on so extensive a scale in general; but now I can as soon believe you to joke as myself to dream, and sooner either than to believe true what you say."

"I knew it would distress you," said Mr. T., as if he really felt for Mr. S. a tender sympathy; "but these things are true. The best support you can find will be in a prayerful examination of your duty, with a resolve to discharge it when known, and that without regard to any thing but the will of God."

"Well, sir," replied Mr. S., "you convinced me sometime since, that our church is a schism; but I could not, nor can I now feel willing to abandon it. My parents and relatives are all there. There was I, if ever, converted to God. It is now like tearing my soul asunder to think of leaving them. If we could persuade them to go, too, the effort would be comparatively light. Though I know Christ says, 'If we hate not mother and father, and brothers and sisters, houses and lands, yea and even our own lives for his sake, we can not be his disciples,' yet I feel that I can not give up Presbyterianism. I can no more tell what to do than I can predict the course of the wind. I will carefully and prayerfully review, in retirement, all my arguments. I have been accustomed to attach no importance to these things; but this apathy, I now see, is inexcusable, and God being my helper, a sense of duty shall be my guide."

Mr. Sellers made excuse that having lost so much time in attending the meetings he was not yet ready for the pulpit on to-morrow, and he left in sadness. Never had he more deeply felt his need of divine aid. His soul was melted in the furnace of sadness, and his sermon the next day breathed unusual unction and power, and the audience was moved to tears.

CHAPTER V. — *Increasing Light.*

MR. TODD was not less sad than Mr. Sellers. Warmly devoted to the academy in all its relations and influences as a means of usefulness, it grieved him to think of giving it up. He tried in vain to dismiss his trouble by the reflection, "God will provide." He felt that self was not all that was involved in the sacrifice—that a mighty engine of power was to be propelled by the energies of schismatics in the perpetuity of evil, unless the institution could be converted to the purposes of the union. He started round to see and condole with the Judge, but stopping in at the store of Theus & Snider, and finding Mr. Theus at leisure, he invited him to a share of his trouble by answering the question, "Why so sad?" Mr. Theus, on hearing his cause of grief, laughingly replied: "Why, sir, you surely have not looked into the matter. Our firm owns \$3,500 of the stock invested in the academy. Rolan owns \$3,000, and you have bought up at a discount, and paid in tuition, over half the whole cost of the property, and it is by the provisions of the charter, perpetually subject to the control of the stockholders. It is ours if we desire it to be so. We could not indeed desire it in a better condition. I wonder you had not thought of that."

"I have," said Mr. Todd, "and I fear you are mistaken. I bought \$4,000 of stock from the Selbys before they moved away, but it was subject to redemption at *six per cent.* on what I paid for it, by old

Mr. Gayle, and I know not whether he intends to redeem it or not. The limitation will expire in two weeks."

Mr. Theus. "Yes; and he is a Rolan man, very strong, to my certain knowledge. More than that, he does not wish to redeem the stock. You may be easy about that matter."

"That is cheering!" exclaimed Mr. Todd, brightening. "I shall visit the Judge in better hopes than I expected. Will you walk round?"

"I thank you; I can not leave at this hour."

Mr. Todd found the Judge busy, as he said, "digging out a channel for his thought to run in" on the great occasion to which he was looking forward.

"Well, how do you make it, Judge?" was the indefinite question with which Mr. Todd prepared the way for a conversation on the subject of the Judge's advertisement. "Are you going to let me into your United Christian Brotherhood, or whatever you may name it?"

"I have been hoping you would see it your duty and privilege to join me, if not to lead me, in the effort to reduce the religious antagonisms of Christendom to harmony and order. I believe you almost promised to weigh the subject fairly and prayerfully. Have you reached your conclusion? and if so, what is it?"

"Well, we will talk a little first, and it may be I *shall* reach my conclusion. Have you read ecclesiastical history much?" asked Mr. Todd, as if disposed to spring a new subject of controversy on the Judge. "Do you know the origin and history of one of the Presbyterian church rites which I have considered.

very important, and which you want me to give up? I mean infant baptism."

"I have read no church history but what is in the Bible. If it is there, I do not want you to give it up; but I frankly confess that after a careful effort to form an unbiased opinion on every single verse in the Bible, I have failed to discover any mention of it, or allusion to it, either by command, prohibition, or recognition. If the Bible authorizes it, I am very anxious to know it. For if my heart does not completely deceive me, I want to know and do the whole will of God."

"But even if the Scriptures do not mention it, as you say and I confess, is that a good reason why we should not practice it? I am not pleading for it, for I am not now in favor of it; but I wish to be fully confirmed. The Bible says nothing about Sabbath Schools, and while some Christians favor and others oppose them, can not the opposers bring the silence of the Scriptures to bear as strongly against them, as we can bring it to bear against infant membership?"

"Not at all," rejoined the Judge; "because, *First*. Sabbath Schools are no part of the church constitution, while infant baptism is. When people join a church they do not subscribe a confession that Sabbath Schools are instituted of God, and those who neglect them thereby sin against an institution of God. *Secondly*. Sabbath schools are not in spirit and tendency opposed to one of God's positive ordinances, while infant baptism is. God requires the baptism of believers; infant baptism substitutes that of unconscious unbelievers. 'Thus making the com-

mandment of God of none effect by human tradition.' I have many other objections against it, which, if you require, you shall have."

"No; the last you gave, I suppose, will satisfy any man who fears God, and I do not see that on this point it will be very important to convince those whom God's Word can not convince. I think it requires the rankest infidelity to contend for infant baptism in the face of your last remark and quotation. I wonder it never struck me so before. Deeply do I repent, and pray God to forgive the sin I committed in submitting my children to receive it. But I did it without knowing it was wrong. I even felt a pious pleasure as if I had discharged an important duty. Never before did I feel so full a conviction that sincerity in an actor can not make the action right, when it is in itself wrong."

"You have, then, renounced infant baptism?" said the Judge.

"I had before concluded to give it up, because I saw no Scripture for it, but did not think ill of it until your remark and quotation about it. I am now opposed to it as anti-christian and anti-scriptural."

"I hope you do not mean that no Christian can abet and practice it, do you?" replied the Judge, with apparent surprise.

"I do, provided he sees it in the light of its true character. The man who, knowing its true character and consequences, as I have to-day seen them for the first time in my life, would charge it on the Word of God as one of its ordinances, must be as bold in—not infidelity—but rebellion, as Tom Paine

or any other contemner of God and his law. I do not deny, however, that many Christians are deceived, and practice it as a pious duty to God. While their sincerity can not alter the character of the action from a sin to a virtue, it may yet shelter them from the censure and punishment of willful rebellion against God, unless their ignorance results from a criminal neglect to study the Scriptures. I am pained to acknowledge this was the case with me. But a merciful Savior has granted me repentance, and I trust him for the remission of my sins."

"I suppose, then," said the Judge, "I may count on your assistance in the search for the church? With such advocacy as yours, the cause, it seems to me, would be certain to succeed. Have you been talking so among any of your brethren?"

"I have told numbers of them that the Bible is silent about infant baptism," replied Mr. Todd; "but till now I did not see that the Bible opposes it. Many of our members, and the preacher, too, seem to be just where you found me when I first came. I believe Presbyterianism is about broken up with us, but I can not tell what will take its place. I suppose you have also been talking with a good many. What result are you able to report?"

"The prospects are favorable for breaking up your schism; but I know not as yet what course to pursue. 'God will provide.' We must study and pray till the day appointed, and if nothing more satisfactory be presented, we shall have to do as we have hitherto thought best. God will accept the best we can do. You intimated, when last we talked at any length on this subject, that you were unwilling to

give up your baptism. I have thought a great deal about it, and can not see a universal union of God's people possible in any mode of baptism but immersion. How do you *now* feel about it?"

"I am still opposed to giving it up," replied he. "First, because I do not believe the mode essential to its validity; and, secondly, I am opposed to rebaptism."

"If mode be not essential," said the Judge, "you would have no sacrifice to make in renouncing one mode for another. Though mode be nothing with you, it is a very serious matter with me, and with many others who love the Savior. Now, if you take sprinkling or pouring as your mode because it will satisfy you, while immersion would satisfy you quite as well, you thus raise a barrier to the church fellowship of all whom your mode would not satisfy. If you ask a brother why he does not take your mode and end the strife, he is compelled to answer that it would wound his conscience, because he does not believe your mode any baptism at all. If he retorts, 'Why do you not take mine?' you can't say you don't believe his mode valid; you are compelled to say it is only my taste that prefers my mode to yours. He might justly reply, 'Charity might induce you to renounce yours, but principle requires me to hold mine.' You could not resist the force of his reply, could you?"

"It would confuse me, I confess," said Mr. Todd, with a very serious air; "but with my conviction that rebaptism is wrong, I should have to sacrifice more than *taste*, if I changed."

"I do not believe sprinkling or pouring, in the

eyes of God, or of the Bible, is any baptism at all," replied the Judge, "and can not see how you can; but even admitting both are, I think I can remove your difficulty. Paul found at Ephesus some disciples many years after John had been beheaded, who said they had been 'baptized unto John's baptism,' but had not even heard of the Holy Spirit. They had been baptized without suitable instructions, perhaps by some who learned the custom from John, but, like some in our day, did not duly instruct their subjects. They were baptized again. Now, sir, in truth, you do not know personally whether you ever in your life received either sprinkling or pouring. If you did, it was in unconscious infancy, it was not your act, was without instruction, and, as you have this evening acknowledged, *against* God's will. Now, how dare you offer it to God as 'the answer of a *good* conscience,' when you had no conscience in the matter? Are you not afraid of insulting God in such a way?"

Mr. Todd actually wept. "I am astounded by my own stupidity. Even if my conscience could be satisfied with nothing but sprinkling or pouring, I should have to receive it after a voluntary profession of my faith in Christ, or it would not be what I have just acknowledged the Bible requires—*believer's baptism*. I can, I will, with all my heart, take immersion."

"Though I see no necessity that you should believe, as I do," said Judge Rolen, "that immersion *alone* is baptism according to the Scriptures, yet I feel some curiosity to hear what arguments justify your view that any thing else will even do for baptism. I want to see if I have been so stupid in my

careful examination of the whole Bible as not to find a thing which is there. Do tell me where you get sprinkling and pouring."

"I never could reason this point for myself," replied Mr. Todd, "nor see much force in the reasons given by Edwards and others. But I found it in our church, and deeming it a *non-essential* any way, I took no pains to study its claims to the confidence of Bible readers. I have seen it alleged by some leading men in our church that, for thirteen hundred years after Christ, immersion was the only mode recognized as valid. John Calvin, the founder of our church, says, 'it was the common mode in the days of the Apostles,' and gives it as his opinion that our Savior received it. The word always used in the Greek Testament to denote the ordinance means to immerse. Prof. Stewart says, 'In this all critics and lexicographers of any note are agreed.' Richard Baxter, the author of the *Saint's Rest*, and many other invaluable books, gives it as the best reason he knows for substituting sprinkling for immersion, that, in cold countries, immersion would be too severe. In frankness, I think we should not recognize any thing for baptism but immersion. And now, sir, I am ready to go with you to Virginia, and join the Baptists. For the conclusions to which we have arrived are exactly those for which they have contended in every age of the Christian era. Thousands and millions of them have been martyred for not recognizing as churches of Christ the schisms of men, and for their tenacious adherence to gospel order. I to-day see and deplore my folly in despising them as bigots and close commun-

ionists. I now see they are the only denomination which is free from schism. Now that my prejudices have vanished, I look back on their history as a beam of light spanning the dark cloud of religious corruption and oppression. Their enemies have branded them with what names they pleased; but their principles have ever been the same with those in which we are now agreed. Their purity of discipline has been the wonder of the world."

The Judge seemed electrified as having found the object of his most anxious inquiries, the information of a people who "held the ordinances as they were delivered" by the author of the Christian church. "And did you say they were persecuted for conscience sake?" asked he, as that additional evidence of their church identity struck his mind. "The Bible said 'the time was to come in which it would be thought God's service to cast out the names of his disciples'—'that all who lived godly should suffer persecution.'"

"Yes, sir; the story of their wrongs both by the Catholics and Episcopalians of Europe and America, when read even by unrelenting enemies, is enough to make stern eyes weep tears, and stony hearts bleed."

"Do you know the name and the address of any one of their preachers?" asked the delighted Judge.

"Yes," replied Mr. Todd; "There are two young ladies in my school who live in the same village with one of their most prominent ministers. There is an influential church of them there, and they have a reputable high school. I have these scholars because the Presbyterians disdain to patronize the

Baptists. They are among the number in my family who have resolved to abjure Presbyterianism."

"This news is too good to believe!" exclaimed he, as if in raptures, and tears of gratitude started in his eyes. "None ever trusted God in vain. We must write for that preacher, and have him here by the day our convention is to be held. What are his name and address?"

"Arthur Smedley, of M——, Va."

"How much will bear his expenses? I will put in the letter a one hundred dollar bill. Do you think that will be enough?"

"O, yes," said Mr. Todd, opening his pocket-book and handing the Judge a fifty dollar bill; "and I must have half the stock thus invested. You had better not intimate that these young ladies are disaffected. It will only rouse the prejudices of their parents to oppose them in what I am sure they intend to do on the day of the convention."

"You are right," replied the Judge. "I should have thought of that myself. I now feel more than ever that we are right. And now, sir, let us proceed fearlessly. Let us open everybody's eyes we can. I feel that God is about to unite his people in this place, and give us such a revival as the history of Christendom has not noted since the days of the Apostles. Let us be humble, and the Lord keep us from pride. Lead us in a season of thanksgiving." They bowed, and first Mr. Todd and then the Judge poured out their hearts, melted with gratitude and love, that God would lead the way in the whole movement, that it might ultimate in his glory.

The city of L—— already began to brighten in

its religious prospects. Particularly the Presbyterian church became more like a house of worship than an extensive fancy show box. The weekly prayer meetings, instead of numbering from twenty to fifty attendants, rapidly swelled their number to a hundred, and frequently more. The prayers were more earnest and animated. They breathed an ardent desire for the most part to be guided into all truth; that the watchmen might all see eye to eye; that all might know and be able to forsake their errors; that the blaze of unsmothered truth might consume every vestige of schism; that dying and blinded sinners might be no longer confused by the antagonisms of rival sects in religion. Mr. Sellers, though he knew not what influences were working these results, was animated and encouraged. He would often preach and exhort as if he desired and hoped to do some good. As he labored with an increase of faith he began to look for the fruits of his labors. He increased his pastoral visits, and, to his surprise found many stout hearts bending before the scythe of earnest truth. He found mourners to comfort. It was in the midst of this heightened interest that the Methodists commenced their meeting. It was remarkable that, although many became the hopeful subjects of conversion, yet only two or three of them attached themselves to the Methodist church. Many seekers joined, and some few of them afterward became converts, but only a few of them professed conversion at all. While Mr. Sellers must have known there were many in his congregation from time to time, who wanted to become members of the church, he still gave no invitation.

And so generally was his reason understood, that few, if any, asked an explanation. He became more earnest and irresistible in his entreaties that God's people would search the Scriptures, and expose their Christian experience, their characters, and their doctrinal views to the severest Bible tests. "Errors of faith, my brethren," said he, as he closed his sermon on the Sabbath morning after the conversations before related, "errors of faith lead to errors in practice and character, just as any cause produces its own effect. Though you may justly accuse me of unpreaching what I have before urged you to believe as truth, still my present convictions impel me to press the point that our faith is the strongest element in the formation of our characters. It grieves me that I ever thought and preached that it is indifferent what we believe, so that we are sincere. We are required to believe the truth. Through nothing else can we be sanctified. If we believe error with all the sincerity of our souls, it does not make it truth. It is still dangerous. If we drink a mixture of poison, its deadly effect can not be prevented merely because we sincerely believed it a wholesome drink. If, in midnight darkness, or stone blindness, we stumble over a precipice, the hurt of the fall can not be avoided merely by the fact that we believed we were walking securely. If we embark in a fragile vessel, our belief that it is strong and impregnable will not make it ride in safety the infuriated billows, nor breast, unhurt, the violence of the storm. The same God who established these physical laws has ordained the sequences of moral causes. The universalist does not, by the

sincerity of his belief, abolish hell; nor the atheist the existence of God. The candid believer in baptismal regeneration still needs the regeneration of God's Spirit. The sincere antinomian is under obligations to preach the Gospel to every creature as much as if he believed and felt the duty. Ignorance and inattention do not annihilate the laws of duty and of God. As we sow we shall reap. Each seed must produce its kind. If we plant coriander, we can not by faith make it yield mustard. The harvest, too, will exceed the smination. An error in faith may yield a whole forest of sins to shade the soul from the enlivening warmth and influence of the sun of righteousness. Study God's Word. He hath magnified it above all his name. It is ballast to steady thy bark mid the tempests of life. 'Tis a sword to beat back thine enemies. 'Tis a lamp to reveal the lurking places of sin in the darkened chambers of thy soul, and to show the footsteps of thy Savior in the confused wilderness of life, God's treasury in which jewels of truth, of promises, and of examples, sparkle in the sunbeams of inspiration. Study the Bible. It will guide and chasten thy devotions to God, control thy duties, adorn thy character, and save thee from ten thousand snares. O, my brethren! would that I could write it as with a pen of iron upon the tablets of your hearts, that you might never forget it. Make God's Word the man of your counsel in testing your evidences of conversion, in proving your character, in trying your church polity! O, make it your shield in the morning and your covering at night! So shall ye walk in light, and be children of light."

CHAPTER VI.—*Sincerity as good as Truth.*

A SEPTEMBER'S powerful sun shone brightly on fields and forests after half a night's incessant rain on the parched earth and withered vegetation. Rejuvenated nature seemed to invite cheerfulness, to animate the desponding breast of the Methodist minister, who was that year located in L—, as he rode forth officially to visit a family living a few miles in the country. Mr. Mullens, whose house he was approaching, had been for years one of the pillars of the Methodist church in L—, but lately he was, for good reasons, suspected for disaffection. A man of good circumstances, fine intelligence and liberality, he could not well be spared by his church or his pastor, and was not to be given up without a serious effort to reclaim him.

"Good morning, Bro. Mullens," said the minister, as they met at the door.

"I am glad to see you, Bro. Sawyer," replied Mr. Mullens, with a smile of mingled pleasure and confusion. After the usual compliments they entered into the following conversation.

Mr. Mullens. "You have had quite a revival in town of late, I understand; but I do not know the particulars. I did not return home till last evening, after an absence of three weeks or over? What news to cheer the friends of Zion?"

Mr. Sawyer. "Very good. Thirty-three seekers and converts altogether joined the Church. About twenty-five professed conversion, who have not yet

joined, but I suppose they will soon ; as they, for the most part, belong to Methodist families. I am glad to learn that absence from home has been the cause of your not attending church for so long. Some have it in town that you are thinking of joining in Judge Rolen's union movement. Believing that you had more piety and better sense than to aid in forming another religious split in our town, I resolved to come out and apprise you that they are using the influence of your name in the effort to awaken disaffection in the churches. Shall I, by your authority, contradict the impression?"

Mr. M. "I think I shall have to plead guilty this time, Bro. Sawyer. You may have been so busily engaged otherwise since the disaffection commenced, as not to consider its causes so fully as I have done, and even you may yet join the disaffection. The importance of union among all God's people has not received the attention it merits. It is a serious thing to hold principles which forbid it. All our churches have some barriers which ought to be removed without delay, so that none who love God, may have to wound their consciences in the effort to become one. If our church was only free from all barriers to conscience, it might constitute the basis of the needed union."

Mr. S. "You don't mean that a Christian can conscientiously object to any feature in our church, do you?"

Mr. M. "I do ; I have thought otherwise, but without due reflection. I had thought taste and education alone determined people in selecting their denominations. But reflection assures me that a sense of

duty to God should influence all, and does influence many. You surely think Judge Rolen a Christian?"

Mr. S. "I did once. But he is making so much ado about his religion, as if nobody before ever became a Christian; trying to break up all the churches in order to head one himself, and proclaiming everywhere he goes the evils and dangers of '*schismatic principles*;' I confess I almost doubt his piety. Indeed, I confess I come nearer doubting his sanity, sometimes. I hate to judge. But really if he is a Christian he takes a strange course. He might know it is impossible to do otherwise than to form another schism, instead of healing those that exist."

Mr. M. "I agree with the Judge, that if the different religious sects can not divest themselves of their schismatic principles, each individual member is bound to disconnect himself from his church, and seek out and occupy such a platform as he can prove scriptural in every feature. If he does this, he is not responsible for the evils of schism, though they be not cured. But if he does not he is. Do you not think it a great sin to make, or indorse schism, in the body of Christ?"

Mr. S. "If people are so nice as to stickle about little non-essentials, I do n't believe we are under obligation to pay any attention to them."

Mr. M. "But suppose we differ about what are non-essentials; and what you call non-essentials are real barriers to my conscience. It could not, with me, be a matter of indifference, could it?"

Mr. S. "Well, no; I suppose not. But what is the feature in our church which offends your conscience?"

Your scruples may be removed; and if so, I will do my best in the effort."

Mr. M. "I heartily thank you, Bro. Sawyer. For the thought of leaving my church has cost me many a hard struggle. I have given all I could to help build our comfortable and commodious meeting-house; and now I can not think, without anxiety, of giving it up and joining a new religious order where I shall be obliged to help to build another. I confess also that I have another feeling—it may be pride, I can't tell—but aside from all considerations of expensiveness, the desertion of kindred, etc., it constitutes the most annoying element in the fear that I shall have to change my religious name. If I can only remain where I am with an easy conscience, I shall be happy to do so."

Mr. S. "Do you really desire to remain, if conscientious difficulties can be explained away? If not, and you are restless to go, I will not make an effort to detain you; for if you have already decided to go, right or wrong, it is not a knowledge of duty, but approbation that you are now seeking. But if, as you say, you are willing to remain, if duty will permit, I will content myself to spend with you the day and night; though I had intended to visit you and Bro. Seely both to-day, on the same business. But if I can succeed, I shall not mind spending a day and night with each of you. For you are both pillars in our church."

Mr. M. "You do me honor overmuch; but Bro. Seely is undoubtedly worth a week's effort. He is young, and a fine scholar, and almost every one believes he will be a preacher of the first order. He

still holds his prayer-meetings in our neighborhood, and I would about as soon hear him as any preacher. But he is a good deal further advanced in the disaffection than I am. I understand he proclaimed last Sabbath evening in the prayer-meeting that he could no longer be a Methodist, and exhorted the congregation against the evils of schism. I have exhausted my powers in trying to show him his error; but he has driven me completely to the wall. I should like to hear you encounter him. Stay all night, and we will go over there to-morrow together. If I could answer him and put him to confusion, I should be satisfied, but I can not answer him, and he keeps me uneasy. I don't know whether he is right or wrong. If I could hear you and him discuss the subject together, I could rely on my judgment of the arguments."

Mr. S. "Well, I believe I shall not go to see him at all. He is just out of college, and thinks he knows everything. I can hope to do nothing with him till he gets over the *big head* a little."

Mr. M. "I disagree with you, Bro. Sawyer, there. I have been very intimate with him ever since he graduated; and if he is not deeply pious and ardently devoted to the truth of God, I am as much deceived as it is possible for me to be. If you will only show him the Bible is against him in any thing, he is at once convinced and converted. I have seen it tried."

Mr. S. "I have no hopes of him and will not go."

Mr. M. "I am such a poor hand to argue, I should be better satisfied if I were to hear you put him to confusion, than if you should make all my argu-

ments look ridiculous. I have no doubt you will do this, and then he will come and confuse me again as much as ever."

Mr. S. "I am not at all afraid to encounter him, but I am satisfied it would do no good. If he is resolved, he is not a subject of conviction. Just name your own difficulties, and judge for yourself if I dispose of them."

Mr. M. "I should do that if he were here. It is my conscience that I want settled. He has alleged a great many objections against Methodism, that I can't answer, and they have great weight with him. But he has failed to make me see them in the same light. I have noted only such as seem to me really serious. Of these I have had *nine* under consideration for more than six weeks. I wrote these down. He has often urged me to note others, but I would not. He thinks me hard to convince."

Mr. S. "O, well; if what you tell me is true, I will relieve your conscience in two hours, without any doubt. Name your first difficulty."

Mr. M. "Let me get the paper, and I will mark them as you dispose of them. I believe after all I shall be better satisfied than if I were to hear you and Bro. Seely discuss the subject together. You would be sure to get on those points that don't weigh with me. *Objection first.* Our church was organized by the Wesleys, while they were professedly unconverted, not as a church, for such they never considered it, but as a society devoted to the moral and intellectual improvement of its members while college students. It was never converted into a church until the year 1784, and then by means too

suspicious to be respected. A bare majority of the General Conference then voted to invest it with the ordinances and ordaining powers of a church. At the next meeting of Conference, the minute of the previous session erroneously reported that the vote had been unanimous for the change. The motion to correct the minute was lost. Now, my difficulty is that having an origin altogether human, and that, too, so suspicious, and so late in the Christian era, we can not be the church our Savior established over 1800 years ago, and fortified with the promise 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Now, if we certainly originated since the apostles' days, I can not understand how it is possible for ours to be the church of Christ."

Mr. S. "Not *the church*, but only a branch of it. I hate the arrogance of Episcopacy which claims to be *the Church of Christ*."

Mr. M. "I understand a branch to be of the same character and qualities with the tree on which it grows. When I inquire for the trunk on which Methodism grew, I find it was Episcopacy, and that was a branch of Romanism; only it is some years older, and the mother of our branch. If Romanism is 'the mother of harlots and abominations, Episcopacy, being a daughter, and Methodism a granddaughter, must be, in a Bible sense, harlots and abominations. This branch notion makes my difficulty worse than it was. I understand Judge Rolan is aiming to form a church in town. Do you think it can be the church, or even a church of Christ?"

Mr. S. "Far from it."

Mr. M. "Well, how can ours be?"

Mr. S. "If our church has principles and purposes according to the Bible, I see not how its modern origin vitiates its claim to be a true church. Does not the commission of our Savior plainly contemplate the formation, in heathen lands, of church after church, through the whole history of Christendom?"

Mr. M. "Truly; the history of the principles is the history of the church. The age of the church is the age of its principles. If, then, our church has no principles but what are scriptural, and all that the Bible has involved in church organization, its origin can not be referred to man at all. The peculiar principles of Methodism distinguish it as the work of the Wesleys. The depravity of man, the necessity of repentance, and the everlasting punishment of the lost, aint called Methodist principles of belief, because all Christians think them Bible doctrines. Them views that none but Methodists believe is in the Bible, are the peculiar views of Methodism. Now these peculiar views and principles are what keeps Methodism from being a Bible church. So are the Presbyterians and all other sects. But when a church is organized with the laws of Christ and the constitution of the New Testament, it is a church of Christ, and as old as the church in Jerusalem would be if it still existed, no matter when or by whom it was organized. In view of these facts, if Judge Rolan forms a church in town, in exact accordance with the Scriptures, will you not recognize it as a true church?"

Mr. S. "No; our town is already taxed to support the churches it now contains, and it would be wrong to make another."

Mr. M. "Well, Bro. Sawyer, how many churches should there be?"

Mr. S. "Only one, by rights. The prophets predicted the day when 'the watchmen shall all see eye to eye, and speak the same thing.' I suppose that will be the millennium, and then will there be only one church. But that can not be in our day."

Mr. M. "Well, was there just needed one more church when ours was formed? Otherwise your objection to Judge Rolen's church is not good. And if even so, I can't see its perfect consistency."

Mr. S. "O, let this point pass; it's of no importance any way. What is your next difficulty?"

Mr. M. "I don't concede that this is unimportant; but supposing you have done with it the best you could, I object, *secondly*, that our church without any scriptural authority, receives seekers of religion, and makes them members at the end of six months if they are willing and they are not too immoral. Now, if this is scriptural, it is right. If not, it is wrong to make it a church principle. What do you say?"

Mr. S. "No one pretends to justify it by Scripture. But it is a wise and good course. But for that, where would our church be in point of members? Twenty-nine of those we received in our late meeting, were seekers. They will attend our church, and class, and Sabbath School, read our denominational works, aid in sustaining our ministers, and all our interests as a church, and when converted, if ever, they will be almost sure to join our church."

Mr. M. "I am not inquiring as to its wisdom; but is it scriptural? As you say it is not, we will try

the *third* difficulty. We invite and encourage professedly unconverted persons to partake of the Lord's Supper; even though we know the Bible declares, 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself? Now, we know that without faith in Christ, they can not be worthy partakers. If, then, we encourage them, do we not God-speed them in a course of damnation? I declare I shudder every time I reflect that I ever have sanctioned it."

Mr. S. "Why, you surprise me, Brother Mullens. Don't you remember that Sue Railey embraced religion in the very act of communing, and what a happy time it was?"

Mr. M. "Yes; and at the ball, not four weeks after, she danced, and is now as wicked as any girl in town."

Mr. S. "Why, she joined as a seeker the other night."

Mr. M. "If you have no Scripture for inviting such characters to the Supper, let us examine my *fourth* objection. It takes six months for a candidate to join our church. I am anxious to see the Scripture for this custom."

Mr. S. "Your conscience surely does not rebel against that? Why, it is the best way in the world to catch all we can, and yet not take into the church any but the genuine. Six months will almost always prove a convert. But for this feature in our church, Sue Railey and how many others, who have turned out badly, would have disgraced it. But you see they never got any further than the antechamber of the church. This feature is almost a perfect sieve

permitting only the wheat to pass and keeping back the chaff."

Mr. M. "I tell you again, I am not inquiring for the human wisdom in these several features of objection in our church. If you will give me Scripture for them, I care not how foolish they may seem, they will suit me exactly. If you will just give me Scripture, or acknowledge there is none, it will cut the discussion short. That a custom is not authorized by the Scriptures is, in itself, no objection with me. It might be innocent and yet not be enjoined in the Bible. I only urge such points as, seeming to conflict with known Scriptures, weigh on my conscience. But I trust my conscience will acquiesce in any thing known to be Scriptural. I do not object to *Band Meetings*, because they are not Scriptural, though Brother Seely deems them seriously wrong. I think them not only innocent, but very useful. If I were trying to get our discipline so correct that everybody could adopt it, I should consent to expunge everything that the Scriptures do not clearly require. But, as I told you before, I only want to get my individual conscience reconciled to Methodism. The objections I allege can be removed only by Scripture. My *fifth* difficulty is that we have three baptisms, whereas, the Scriptures intimate that there is only one. We let candidates appoint the mode in which the church is to observe that sacred ordinance with which Christ intrusted her, requiring her 'to keep the ordinances as they were delivered unto her.' This looks to me a good deal like making merchandize of baptism. If people won't take it the way God appoints it, we, very much like Catholics,

license a change. If the Scriptures authorize but one, we all know what that is."

Mr. S. "But there is controversy and perhaps honest difficulty about what that mode is, and it looks too arrogant to set up ourselves to decide for everybody."

Mr. M. "My question is, do the Scriptures enjoin or authorize more than one mode of baptism?"

Mr. S. "To be short and frank, *no*; but I am opposed to choosing the religion, even in its form, for any one. I want conscience untrammelled. Soul-liberty is a priceless jewel."

Mr. M. "I am glad to hear you talk so, for I am sure you will sympathize with me in my *sixth* objection to Methodism; that it kidnaps the consciences of infants, and chooses their religion, and crams it on them without any regard to their will in the matter."

Mr. S. "If I had foreseen the use you would make of my remarks, I would not have made them; for I am in favor of infant baptism, and like for Methodists to have their children baptized into their own religion."

Mr. M. "My *seventh* objection is, that our church declares these infants regenerated in baptism, which I can not believe, and I consider it highly calculated to deceive them."

Mr. S. "Why, Brother M.! you shock me by the recklessness of your assertion. Our church neither believes nor declares any such thing."

Mr. M. "But the Conference does."

Mr. S. "Not at all. You are utterly reckless."

Mr. M. "Does not Conference indorse and circulate the Doctrinal Tracts by Wesley?"

Mr. S. "Certainly."

Mr. M. "Do you not know that one of those tracts is to show that infants are ordinarily regenerated by baptism?"

Mr. S. "No; on the honor of a Christian is it so?"

Mr. M. "It is so. The author tries very hard to prove it. You will find something very much like it on page 107 of our discipline. And here I base my *eighth* objection on the irresistible inference from the doctrine of this tract, that unbaptized infants are ordinarily *damned*."

Mr. S. "Brother Mullens! you don't think our church believes such abominable doctrine as that, do you? *You know it does not.*"

Mr. M. "It either does, or requires all its members to lie!"

Mr. S. "Why, you are still more;—but I will not censure this time till you explain."

Mr. M. "An acknowledgment is published in the discipline that the members indorse the acts of Conference. For inveighing against its doctrine, any one is to be expelled. Now, sir, I appeal to you, if every member of the Methodist church is not held up as acknowledging all the doctrines of his church. If, then, any one does not believe that doctrine, you shall decide the question, does he not *lie* about it?"

Mr. S. "I hate to acknowledge it; but if I say no, I shall lie myself, which I dare not do. But you don't really think that as bad as common lying, do you?"

Mr. M. "It is, unless the license of Conference can

change its character in the sight of God. Do you believe it can?"

Mr. S. "Of course not. But let us take your next difficulty."

Mr. M. "My *ninth* objection is that after all we have been saying about the Methodist church, there is, in fact, no such establishment in existence."

Mr. S. "I suppose you feel that you have so completely demonstrated our anti-scriptural features, that you can now deny that we are a church at all."

Mr. M. "Not that; but I mean that, in any sense of the word church, there is no such thing as the Methodist church. Give a definition of a church, any you choose."

Mr. S. "A church is a body of people organized for religious purposes, and holding the ordinances of the New Testament."

Mr. M. "Your definition was made to suit Methodism as much as possible. Now, let us see. The so-called Methodist church in L—— can neither administer the ordinances, nor appoint one to do it."

Mr. S. "But you forget that, strictly speaking, the Conference is the church. The church in L—— is only a society subject to Conference."

Mr. M. "Well, sir, Conference never celebrates the ordinances. Now, where is the Methodist church?"

Mr. S. "I can not answer your question to your satisfaction, but it is of no importance. You have made quite a discovery. But go on with your objections."

Mr. M. "But why further? as you do not answer them. You promised, in two hours, to answer my objections, and reconcile me to Methodism. Since

you acknowledge yourself unsuccessful in every effort, will you not have to leave the church yourself?"

Mr. S. "Not while I can find its shadow. I don't think it matters what we believe, or what church we are in, if we are sincere, good Christians. But I am curious to learn all your objections."

Mr. M. "*Tenth.* Our government is unscriptural and tyrannical. New Testament church government is congregational, ours national. In New Testament churches all the Christians had a vote. In ours, a few hundred circuit-riders, with the elders and bishop, govern the whole communion of stationed preachers and lay members, and control according to their own will, right or wrong, all the immense funds collected off the laity. We have no appeal from the laws or management of Conference, except the glorious privilege of leaving the society."

Mr. S. Well, sir, you have magnified this feature into a great evil. In fact, however, it is not so bad. When did you know this power to be abused? But let us take up another objection. I want to get through with them all. I have a few things to say in a general way, which I hope will have better effect than these strictures on isolated points."

Mr. M. "Well, you now have the last, except that our church does not follow its own discipline. Many of its points are not enforced. Our preachers take the liberty to explain them away for the most part. But on this article I forbear, as, instead of one, I should have many objections, if it were not so. I should like to hear your general remarks."

Mr. S. "All human works, as well as Methodism,

are imperfect. All are liable to objections. I have admitted the soundness of most of your objections, yet Methodism is one of the greatest boons of the human race. In this day of superficial learning on the one hand, and of religious strife on the other, the great dangers and tendency are, that we may lose vital piety in quest of pure theory. It matters little what we believe, or what church we belong to, if we are sincere in our purpose to glorify God and do good in the world. All the churches are liable to objections. He who would do the most good must take and maintain a place in any one of them, and instead of perplexing himself to find a pure organization, give all his efforts to promote the general good. The best way to secure the unity designed in the Bible, is by silence on those controverted points, which only gender heart burning and suspicions. Know no man after the flesh. Treat all as God's people, and in that way you can do more to 'preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' than in any other "

Mr. M. "But, Bro. S., do you not violate your own advice? I think I have Summers, Chapman, Edwards, and Clealand on baptism, which I bought of you only a few months ago. Frogge's Review of Pendleton's Three Reasons, and Brownlow's Answer to the Great Iron Wheel; I do n't know but I bought all these from you. Now, these are highly controversial. I can't half agree that it is indifferent what we believe. As our faith is, so are our characters. But one thing you said will shield me from your censure, if I find and join a church less schismatic in principle than our own. You said it makes no

difference. But it is not so with me. Still, if you are sincere in the sentiment, you will still treat me as ever, and come and see me, and pray for me. You have acknowledged most of my difficulties sound and answered none of them. I did not believe them so fully before as since you have indorsed them. I do not believe God's church is liable to a single objection by any Christian. I agree that all human churches are. If I find the true church, as I hope to do soon, I will join it. I could not glorify God by living in some other church in preference to his."

Dinner was now announced, and the preacher seemed really relieved by a want of opportunity to reply. The conversation wandered from this subject altogether. When dinner was over, the preacher remembered that he had that morning forgotten to call to see a sick member in the edge of town, and was soon on his way home. Mr. Seely had become a warm advocate of Christian union, and had read and commented publicly the Sabbath before on the Judge's advertisement. Before this visit Mr. Sawyer had thought he might save Mr. Mullens. But priestcraft dies where the people think for themselves.

CHAPTER VII.—*Never too late to try.*

THE religious interest in L—— increased daily. The convention proposed was anticipated by the wicked with trembling and alarm. They felt that it would remove one of the props of their infidelity. They stood insecurely. A deep work was felt and seen in the community. Satan was alarmed for the stability of his empire. He knew that if all God's people combined against him, it would reduce his kingdom to fragments. He is, however, not easily foiled. His sagacity and energy were on the stretch. He is immediately transformed into an angel of light. He would if possible decoy into his service the very elect of God. But will God allow him to deceive into such danger one of his servants? Will he not rather, with the temptation, make a way for his escape? Satan's tocsin sounds for volunteers. There comes to his rescue a most loyal subject, clothed with the power of learning, and high position—a man, who clothed with the mantle of religion, the love of filthy lucre, and a preference for worldly preferment over truth and piety—could brave the Psalmist's pious acknowledgement, "Thou hast magnified thy truth above all thy name," with the heaven-insulting declaration, that it made no difference with him what a man believed, whether truth or error, so that he was honest in his belief. To him, Satan commended his cause in L——, and a mighty defense did he make. Well did his services merit the honor of "third ruler" in the realm he

might be said to have snatched, with his own arm, from the invading army of the living God. So soon as he accepts a commission from his tyrant master, he sets a day—the last Sabbath before the convention—and publishes in the city paper, that he will then rally and harangue the opposition. We shall, perhaps, hereafter visit the scene of hostilities, and note the adroitness of our enemy, though Christians would rather be from such a scene. At present more weighty matters claim notice. It is now Saturday morning before the convention. This day and the one following are big with events which the reader would not pardon the chronicler for omitting. Mr. Hall is the Reform preacher, a warm advocate of the Union movement, polished in manner, and generous in heart. He is, therefore, loved by his acquaintances. He is dignified, critically learned, and in the pulpit passionately eloquent and impressive. It is of course implied that he had a strong influence. By him had been tendered to Judge Rolan the use of the Christian meeting-house for the convention. At the study of the latter is this morning held a meeting of the most decided advocates of the Union, to arrange preliminaries for Thursday. 1. On motion, Mr. Sellers is made Chairman, and Mr. Theus, Secretary, and it is agreed that they hold office till succeeded by others. 2. The object of the meeting being explained by the chair, Mr. Todd arose and said: “Mr. President—from every intimation, it is confidently believed our town will be crowded on Thursday, with people from far and near, who will be anxious to hear the address, and witness the proceedings of the convention. As no house in town

will be sufficient to accommodate them, I move that Messrs. Snider, Mullens, and Trimble be a committee to superintend the preparation of a stand in the grove, with seats enough for ten thousand people, and report the expenses at our next meeting for business. The lumberyard is convenient, and Mr. Banks has proffered to lend the lumber." The resolution passed unopposed.

Judge. "I move that Messrs. Todd, Hall, and Harmon be a committee to take care of company." Carried.

Mr. Shouse. "I live two miles in the country, but I shall be glad to take care of one hundred horses, and as many people as will come that distance for accommodation."

Mr. Mullens. "Has any word been received from the Baptist preacher?"

Judge. "I will read his letter :

'*My unknown Bro. in Christ:*—I will be in your town and at your house on the Saturday evening before the convention, unless Providence prevents. Warmly sympathizing with your apparent love of truth, and determination to obey it, I am, &c.,

A. SMEDLEY.'

I am expecting him to-day by two o'clock."

Mr. Sellers. "He must preach to-morrow in our pulpit. Tell him so. Duty requires me to visit some serious people, and I shall not see him till after tea."

Mr. Todd. "I move that the order of the day on Thursday be—1st. The Judge's address. 2nd. Mr. Smedley's. 3d. Voluntary addresses, until the importance, practicability, and means of our object are as fully

developed as possible; and, 4th. That we organize a church."

This order, after some discussion, was adopted. Adjourned till 10 o'clock on Thursday. Prayer by Mr. Theus.

Mr. Hall invited the Judge to remain, and after the meeting dispersed, they conversed as follows :

Mr. H. "It gives me great pleasure to see such interest manifested in the subject of Christian Union. I have pleaded for it in most of my sermons. Having the ears of none but my own brethren, I am conscious of contributing but little, if any thing, to the present interest; I believe it was awakened wholly through your influence; but still it gives me unaffected pleasure. The attitude in which we have always stood to the subject warrants the idea that our church is bound to share its benefits in a large degree. I think the principles of church organization you have deduced from the Bible are precisely the same as ours. We have the congregational, independent form of government—all our members are voluntary professors of their own faith in Christ, and we have no schismatic principles; because we have no creed, except the Bible. From your advertisement, I judge you have not acquainted yourself with our church polity, have you?"

J. "I believe your polity is not defined in any official document; but I have heard it orally defined in different ways by different ones of your ministers and members. I suppose I may consider myself as well acquainted with it as your own members are. It is, however, in my opinion, one of the objections

to your church, that its polity is not officially defined and published."

Mr. H. "The Bible alone is our creed. We adopt all the principles and ordinances there laid down, and observe them as they are enjoined."

J. "In this purpose you are not peculiar. All other denominations profess the same purpose. You take your construction of the Bible; they take theirs. To decide whether or not a church is right, we must regard its distinctive features. All churches are agreed in most they profess. Only a few features distinguish yours from all others. Some you hold in common with the Methodists. As you have remarked, your government is independent and congregational—your members, voluntary—your mode of baptism, immersion, and its design, the remission of sins. These four features are peculiar to your church. No other in this community has any one of them. Do I understand your polity correctly?"

Mr. H. "I think you do, perfectly. So strongly characteristic are these features that they could not be more so, if printed as our creed. All who hold them are Reformers; none are genuine Reformers who reject any one of them. Now, are they scriptural? If so, we certainly have the Bible basis of Christian Union. All Christians can not unite on all their views of the Bible. It is unavoidable that some will have one view, and some another, on most points in the Bible. The Christian, who believes one thing when he enters the church, may, in the study of the Bible, come to believe differently after a while. If a creed binds him to his first notion, he has to

change church relations, or still profess what he does not believe. Do you not think it best to leave all free to exercise and enjoy their own private judgments on all points not necessarily involved in church organization?"

J. "Most unhesitatingly do I answer affirmatively your last question. Nothing is so productive of schism, in my opinion, as the multiplicity of points on which creeds attempt to declare the faith of their churches. We are babes in knowledge when first converted. We don't know one-half the Bible teaches. If we adopt a creed declaring that it teaches thus and so, when we have not read in the Bible one-half the creed teaches, we lie on all these points. To declare to be true, what we do not know to be true, is falsehood, even though what we declare true, is true. For in the declaration we profess the knowledge of its truth. Now, how many Presbyterians knew, when they joined their church, that the Bible teaches, 'God ordained whatsoever comes to pass?' Without denying its truth, I will say that every one who indorses it, without knowing for himself that the Bible teaches it, perpetrates falsehood in that very indorsement, just as really as in indorsing the idea that the Bible teaches infant baptism. Now, how many millions of falsehoods, told in this way, bring the blight of their curse on the various schisms in religion. Indeed there are thousands who subscribe these creeds without even knowing what *they* teach. In this alone, it seems to me, is found sin enough to blast the influence of all the churches. To show the tendency of this evil. Suppose three years ago, I had joined a

church expressing in its creed that the Bible teaches the final perseverance of the saints. I did not believe it then. It would have been a falsehood for me to subscribe that creed. Now the Bible has taught it to me. I believe no truth more firmly. Or suppose I had joined a church whose creed denied that doctrine, should I not have lied by continuing to indorse that creed when the Bible taught me better? I have thought schismatics believe it in the power of their churches to license lying. I have heard them discussing sometimes when I know in reason that they were convinced of the errors they advocated, and yet they declared them true according to the best of their knowledge. If I were to do so, I should fear I might be damned for it, just as I should for any other species of lying. I was once a very decided Armenian in belief. Had I made that my published creed, all the tendencies would have impelled me to seek confirmation. I should probably have rejected everything that tended to unsettle me in the belief. But the more I read the Bible, and reflected, the more I doubted, until I renounced it as a manifest error, and am now a strong Calvinist. To have a creed embracing all points of belief, implies that all babes in Christ are men in Bible knowledge. A creed, as you say, should undoubtedly embrace only such points as are necessarily involved in church constitution. The form of government, and the terms of membership must be defined, or there can be no organization at all. In effect, you have this organization. Your unwritten creed is, that a church is a congregation of Christians, who meet in some place, to worship God. Your

terms of membership, always explained, are *faith, repentance, and immersion in order to the remission of sins*. This creed is sufficiently comprehensive, if it can be proved scriptural. The right to commune in any church implies membership; and it is useless to have a negative clause, that *none but members* shall commune. But, after all, it is still true that your church is a schism; that is, you can not prove to all Christians that its principles are all scriptural."

Mr. H. "Which do you regard unscriptural?"

J. "Baptism in order to remission is one."

Mr. H. "You say one; are there any others?"

J. "This involves several. It puts faith in Christ before repentance toward God. This in effect does away with both faith and repentance, and deceives every soul who believes this creed. So that what you preach for the Gospel, is really no Gospel, but directly opposed to it. None can believe your creed and the Gospel at the same time. I hope you will not consider me wanting in charity."

Mr. H. "By no means. If you believe so about my doctrine, and do not both tell me so, and give your reasons, I shall think you not only uncharitable but cruel. The same feeling that would induce you to rouse a man sleeping in a burning house, and acquaint him with his danger, should impel you, only more strongly, if you think me deceived by my religion, to make me acquainted with the deception. Nay, I go farther; if you were not to try your very best, I should rather call you a soul-murderer, than a charitable man. Much of what is called charity in religion is soul-murder. I hope you will make an honest effort."

J. "I doubt not there are many Christians in your church but your doctrine did not make them so. Indeed, I deem it entirely impossible for one to believe the Gospel at all, without renouncing your creed. The Christians among you don't fully believe it. They may not know how to refute it, but they know it is false somewhere. But before I could affirm or deny the genuineness of your individual hope, I should have to hear your reasons for entertaining it. Will you give them?"

Mr. H. "Certainly. I do not remember the time when I doubted whether Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of sinners. But until I was nineteen years old, that faith did not influence my life. I was wholly careless and unconcerned about my condition before God. I had no fear of being lost. I always intended to repent and join the church before I died. When about nineteen, I became afraid, while hearing a warm sermon, that I might neglect too long. I was really distressed, as I had often been before, and sat revolving in mind the great question, 'What must I do to be saved?' when the minister remarked to the people that, if they believe that Jesus is the Christ, and were sorry for their sins, their next duty was to come then, confess the Lord, be baptized for the remission of their sins, and they would then have God's promise of salvation. 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' So soon as I heard his explanation, I felt comforted, because I knew I could easily comply with those terms, and would do it. I was the first who embraced his invitation. Since my baptism my hope of salvation has never been clouded, except by

the fear that I might not hold out faithful to the end, and be saved. But I have no wish as yet to give up. You now have the reasons for my hope in Christ. Could you give me the hand of fellowship?"

J. "I am sorry to say it, but truth requires it; I would as soon have no reasons at all. You took disbelief of the gospel for faith in the very outset. Did you not say you believed the gospel for years before it influenced your life?"

Mr. H. "I did; and to this day I have not more fully believed it."

J. "'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is passed from death unto life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is born of God.' 'Faith works by love, and overcomes the world.' The Bible speaks of 'the obedience of faith.' Paul said his sole object in preaching was to produce 'the obedience of faith.' Faith can't exist without obedience. 'The righteousness of faith' means that where faith is there is also righteousness. Yet, in opposition to these plain scriptures, you declare you had the faith of the gospel without its affecting your life at all. Your preacher was a deceiver. He might by a few questions have learned that you were in total darkness as to the nature of faith. He might thus have encouraged you to seek the Lord. But the deception has stilled your conscience, and, I fear, it will be alarmed no more. The truth is, you never have received the faith of the gospel, and you do not yet know what it is. But Christ says if you believe not the gospel, you shall be damned. I feel alarmed for you, and hope you will be patient while I attempt to

show you several reasons why I think your hope is unsound. You have never repented toward God. The alarm you felt while that preacher was warning you was produced by a sense of your *condition*. So you said. You seem to have had no just views of your *character*. Your repentance was all toward consequences. It was not toward God—not on account of your wickedness so much as of your danger. In genuine repentance we forget our danger in an overwhelming sense of baseness. Did you ever think yourself the worst sinner in the world?"

Mr. H. "No, sir; I was one of the most moral boys in our neighborhood. Though I say it myself, it is true; I never could swear, or lie, or engage in any of the naughty tricks for which our neighbor boys were so famous. If I had felt as you say, it would have been a false feeling, and surely could not have been a part of true repentance."

J. "Just as I supposed. You never felt the weight of your own guilt. Paul was as moral as you—'as touching the law blameless.' When he persecuted the church he thought he was doing God service. Yet he said, 'Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' When he saw his own heart, he thought it the blackest in the world. I could instance my own feelings; but my example would not do, for I really was as great a sinner as ever sought and found mercy."

Mr. H. "Why, Judge! Your neighbors thought you one of the best men that lived, not to be a Christian."

J. "I can't help that. They did not know me as I saw myself. I thought with all my heart that a

worse sinner never ventured to ask God for mercy. Oh, I can't forget the bitter hour. I had prayed, and wept, and read, and mourned over my hard heart for dreary, melancholy weeks, but still I found no solid comfort. While I had confidence in my prayers, a little ray of vain comfort would encourage me to pray and hope on. I thought I was, in some sense, getting ready to come to Christ. But when I learned my efforts had been all in vain—that not one of them had been heard or accepted with God—that not one could be till I received Christ by faith—that the longer I continued so, the greater sinner I became—that I had been all that time lying before the cross and insulting the Savior by the effort to weave for myself a robe of righteousness in preference to accepting his—that I never could be accepted with him till I cut off all recourse on the world and its pleasures—that I must first pass the threshold of sinful enjoyment, and close the door behind me forever, before the vail of unbelief would fall from over the mercy seat and reveal the offended Sovereign as a smiling, forgiving Savior. Ah! then was a depth of bitterness that words have never measured. I felt then what I would before have spurned if alleged by man, that I was a sinner of the deepest dye—that I deserved the lowest place in hell. Oh! I saw aggravations in my sins which I never saw in those of my neighbors. I felt indeed that I deserved no better, and should be lost forever. But oh! when I threw myself, sustained only by the promise of God—a promise I feared to claim—upon the mercy I had slighted so often, a wretch that I was, I felt his love;" and here the tears rolled down the cheeks

both of the Judge and Mr. Hall, but with sobs and feelings he could not control, he continued in faltering accents, "I had tasted, and seen that the Lord was gracious. I now knew what it was to agonize, to enter in at the strait gate. I knew what it was to mourn. Mr. Hall, do you?"

"No, sir," replied he, as a fresh flood of tears gushed forth. "I know not what is meant by seeking the Lord—nor mourning—nor 'striving to enter in.' I have honestly told you all I know experimentally about religion. I doubt not I am deceived. I am not a child of God. I have honestly thought I was. I had slept till death, if you had not alarmed me. Pray for me. Can God be merciful to me? A hundred times have I received unworthily the memorials of his death. All that I have baptized I have deceived and ruined forever. Can there be mercy for me? Do entreat the Lord for me. Oft have I preached that sinners have no right to pray. But now I am a sinner, and if I don't pray I shall be damned. Tell me in truth, have I a right to pray?"

J. "'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord. He will abundantly pardon.' 'God hath commanded all men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.' We can't excuse ourselves from the obligation to pray by refusing to repent and believe the gospel. Strange such sophistry could ever enter the pulpit! If you feel your lost condition, you can't help praying. I would advise you to cry mightily unto God. I might proceed to

show the rottenness of your experience in several other particulars; but if you have abandoned your hope, something else will better suit your case. You must give up all recourse on the world. Christ said, 'Come unto me,'—put your trust in no other—leave your sins behind—give him an undivided heart—he will not be a partial Savior—he will be a whole one or none. 'All ye that labor,'—Oh! how you must toil in fear and effort to enter the narrow way!—'and are heavy laden,' whose hearts are sinking under their burden, who agonize with sorrow and apprehension, 'and I will give you rest.' I will calm that aching heart and soothe that burning conscience. I will pierce, with the beams of my gracious smile, the cloud of woe that begooms thee. 'Take my yoke upon you.' O, yes! we must first come to him by repentance and faith, and then take his yoke, baptism, and all other duties. 'And learn of me.' He must be our teacher. After enlisting in his service, we have much to learn—must make his Word the man of our counsel. 'For I am meek and lowly in heart.' Meekness and humility are the lessons we most need. Mercy is a breeze that passes near the ground. Humility will enable us to catch its refreshings. 'And ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Soul-rest is found only in the path of duty. It is the only kind we may safely seek this side 'the rest that remains for the people of God.' 'Woe to the soul at ease in Zion.' The Christian needs not to see his salvation involved in the discharge of his duties. He finds his rest in performing them. 'For thy yoke is easy, and my burden light.' 'Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths peace.' O,

take this promise, and go to the Savior at once: 'Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.' Or this — 'In the day thou seekest me with all thy heart, I will be found of thee.' Or this — I shall never forget it—it was the ladder on which my soul climbed up to the glorious knowledge of God's favor: 'I will trust him though he slay me.' Shall we not bow and ask God for his mercy?" After a season of prayer, the weeping Judge left the weeping minister alone with God, and hastened home to receive Mr. Smedley.

CHAPTER VIII.—*Spots.*

A FEW moments after the Judge reached home, from Mr. Hall's study, he received his anxiously expected guest and brother, the Baptist preacher from Virginia. He was almost too happy for earth, except when a thought of the distressed and weeping minister beclouded his joy for a moment, long enough to breathe an earnest prayer for the blessing of God on him. His first object of inquiry was for the denominational tenets of Mr. Smedley and the Baptists. Mr. Smedley, after giving a brief view of their church organization and polity, remarked that their history could be identified only by these principles: that from the day of Pentecost till now, they have been named and nick-named according to the will of their persecutors; that he considered the history of these principles the history of God's church. He then spent about fifteen minutes in a rehearsal of their general history.

The Judge was delighted beyond measure to find his notion of a church so fully realized in the Baptists, of whom he had known nothing except what Mr. Todd had a few weeks before told him, and what he had gathered, about three years before, from a few scurrilous allusions, by Peter Edwards, in his little book against Bible baptism.

Dinner being over, the Judge, after venting his joyous feelings in another expression of delight on the reception of the first man to whom, in his life,

he felt an unrestrained willingness to unbosom his whole soul, proceeded to say :

"I hope you will not grow impatient over the one hundred and one questions I wish you to answer for my edification. You must know that I was for a long time an Infidel. When quite young, I read Paine and others, who poisoned my mind against the Bible. I *could* not believe it the Word of God. But the soul-subduing memory of my mother's piety, with the many unquestioned evidences of divinity which poured irresistibly upon my mind, as I read from time to time those portions, hallowed and consecrated by the remembered accents of her earnest, trembling voice, as she would repeat them to me, *would not let me* wholly disbelieve it. I never abandoned the desire and the effort to believe it. Though I was not at all desirous to obey it, yet I suppose I read it a dozen times entirely through before I was converted. All that while I felt the irresistible weight of three difficulties ; the impiety and divisions among Christians, and the contradictions I found in the Bible."

"And the opposition of a depraved heart," replied Mr. Smedley, must be noted as a fourth, which is really the greatest of all."

"Undoubtedly," replied the Judge, "but of that I was not then conscious. The depravity of my will was no doubt the chief hindrance, or the stroke which slew my love of sin could not have succeeded without the removal of the third I mentioned. But although I now believe with all the assurance of an unquestioned verity, that the Bible is inspired of God, yet one of these difficulties still limits my en-

joyment of the Bible. I sometimes think that, like the disobedient Jews, and for the same reason, I am appointed unto stumbling. These contradictions still annoy me. While the Bible appears to me beautiful as the rainbow, it is disfigured here and there by unsightly and unaccountable spots. Though like a statue of pure gold, it is dimmed by blotches, and deformed by wrinkles. Can you sympathize with me in this, or is the fault wholly with me?"

"O yes," said Mr. Smedley, "the Bible has many *apparent* contradictions, which careful examination will prove to be minute coincidences."

"I do not mean these," interrupted the Judge, "for they are its most sparkling beauties, and, in themselves, strong proofs of inspiration. But I find many direct contradictions, in words, where the context furnishes no clue to a satisfactory explanation."

"I was about to remark, when you stopped me," said Mr. S., "that there are a good many of that character also, in our version; but none, I believe, in the originals from which it was translated into English. The originals are inspired, while our version is only a human translation, and has not the perfection and the purity of the originals."

"Well, sir," said the Judge, in great earnestness, "if you can, by reference to the originals, remove these difficulties, you will confer a great favor on me."

Mr. Smedley. "I only understand the original of the New Testament, which is Greek. The Old Testament is in Hebrew, which I have never studied. It may be that the explanations given by Hebrew scholars will satisfy you, as well as they have satisfied me."

Judge. "Certainly; if ours is a human translation, it is only the opinion of scholars about the meaning of the originals. Scholarship and faithfulness, in the translators, are all the assurances we can have that any part of the Bible is according to the original."

Mr. S. "I will do the best I can; state one of your difficulties, and we will try it."

"I scarcely know where to begin," replied the Judge, walking to his library, and drawing a notebook full of notes and references. "I will first turn to contradictions, as I feel most desirous to have them explained. I have also some passages noted, which, if opportunity allow, I wish you to explain, though they do not seem to be contradictory. 1 Chron. x, 14. 'Saul inquired not of the Lord, therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom to David.' Now, this seems very clearly to contradict 1 Sam. xxviii, 6. 'And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.' If God rejected him for *not* inquiring of him, how could he reject him, when he *did* inquire of him."

Mr. S. "Yours is a natural difficulty. The Septuagint version, which is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek, made before the days of our Savior, and from which he and his Apostles often quoted, reads these passages without a contradiction. There are said to be different words in the original, both rendered '*inquired*.' The first means to inquire *earnestly*, and the last to inquire *in a light manner*, which Saul did when he inquired through divination."

J. "That is beautiful. What a pity our transla-

tors did not notice and correct that! 1 Cor. xv. 50. 'Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God.' In Rev. iv, 6, where the Revelator gives a scene in Heaven, he says, 'In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.' Now, a beast has flesh and blood, and how can beasts be in Heaven?"

Mr. S. "The word here rendered beasts is *zoa*, *living creatures*. *Therion* means a beast."

J. "Thank you. That is plain. But in reading some parts of the Bible, I get the idea that hell is a place of unutterable torment—the everlasting home of the wicked. But in Acts ii, 27, 31, the prophet personates our Savior, and says, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell. . . . His soul was not left in Hell.' Now, was our Savior in Hell? If so, why did he go thither? I once heard a wicked man advance the comment on this place that the Savior visited Hell because he intended to redeem its inhabitants. Though I can not receive his view, because of the many Scriptures which contradict it, yet I see no better explanation of it to this day. Several other texts express a similar idea. 2 Sam. xxii, 6, David says, 'The sorrows of Hell compass me about.' Ps. lxxxvi, 13: 'For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest Hell.' I have several other passages noted; but perhaps one explanation will do for all. The Universalist has a great deal more Scripture for his dogma, than Pede-Baptists have for sprinkling infants."

Mr. S. "Our version is lamentably erroneous on this point. There is only one Greek word which

means Hell, and nothing else; and yet our translators have rendered four Greek words *Hell*. *Gehenna*, which means Hell is in neither of the passages you quote; nor is *Tartarus*, which the heathens used for the unhappy part of *Hades*. *Hades*, which seems to denote the dwelling place of all souls, whether righteous or wicked, from death till the resurrection, without denoting their condition, is the word used in all but one of these texts, viz.: that in 2 Sam. xx, 6. Here *thanatos* is employed, which means *natural death*. You are right in the supposition that this explanation suits all similar cases. *Gehenna* is never used to denote death, nor *hades*, nor the grave. It always means *Hell*."

J. "What could have induced such dangerous confusion? These errors will perhaps ruin thousands of souls. Our Bible surely ought to be revised. Can we have a conscience void of offense toward God and man, if we do not have these glaring errors corrected? But enough already burdens our minds, at least for the present, and we will defer this to future leisure. But what can you do with Gen. xxxii: 28. 'Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel?' After this, in a multitude of places, both God and men call him Jacob, for the Bible so records it. Now how can the declaration harmonize with the fact?"

Mr. S. "'Thy name shall not *always* be called Jacob, but Israel.' That was a very palpable contradiction."

J. "Matt. iv: 10. 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' Luke xiv: 'Then shalt thou have worship in the presence of

them that sit with thee.' This makes our Savior sanction human worship, even after forbidding it."

Mr. S. "*Proscuno* is correctly rendered *worship* in the first quotation; but *doxa*, improperly in the last. It means *glory*. I suspect the Episcopal king, who trammeled our translators, caused them to stumble on this error."

J. "The Scriptures speak of several persons brought to life before our Savior's resurrection; yet Acts xxvi: 23, reads, 'that Christ should be the first to arise from the dead.'"

Mr. S. "It should read, 'Christ should be the first from the dead by resurrection,' and that would obviate the difficulty."

J. "That is satisfactory. In the Old Testament, it is said, 'God tempted Abraham;' in the New, that 'God tempteth no man.' I can't account for this, without supposing God to have changed since the Old Testament was written."

Mr. S. "In the New Testament the translation is right; in the Old, it should be, 'God proved Abraham.'"

J. "Christ says, 'He that calleth his brother a fool shall be in danger of hell-fire.' Which word is here used for hell?"

Mr. S. "*Gehenna*."

J. "Well, this is the most awful curse that can be pronounced, and it is for 'calling a brother a fool.' I have been astounded at the contradiction between this and an expression our Savior is said to have used when, after his resurrection, he met with his sad and disconsolate disciples, as they were vainly endeavoring to cheer each other: 'O, fools!

and slow of heart to believe,' etc. I have wondered if it could be that Christ, who is often held up as our pattern, intended this as a violation of his own law, to show that he is not amenable to it. I have sometimes thought it inferable that his commands are more binding on us than his example. But what does it mean?"

Mr. S. "The first translation is right, and the last should be, 'O, inconsiderate ones,' etc."

J. "How inexcusable in the translators to make such blunders! They might have done better, if they had only ordinary scholarship. I have a case which I am almost afraid to present. I could believe any thing on the testimony of the Bible; but that looks so unreasonable, I will present it. Judges xv: 19. Samson was in Lehi. The men of Judah had bound him with strong cords to deliver him to the Philistines. When they came upon him, he snapped the cords like burned tow, snatched up the jawbone of an ass, and with it slew a thousand Philistines. He thirsted, and called on God to give him water. Now comes the language which, to me, seems so strange: 'God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore, he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day.' Now do I rightly understand this to mean that the fountain of water issued from the jawbone of the ass? If so, the miracle is as strange as it would be to make two mountains without a valley between."

Mr. S. "All who read this paragraph, I presume, so understand it. But the Septuagint gives a very

different idea. Lehi seems to have been a valley. Its name means a jawbone. The verse you read should begin thus: 'God cleft, or opened, a place in Lehi.' You find the name Lehi in the last of the verse. There is just as much reason to render it jaw there as in the first part of the verse."

J. "This error seems less excusable than the last. I shall not now fear to present any thing which strikes me as wrong. It is said that Elisha caused forty-two little children to be slain for saying to him, 'Go up, thou bald head.' They did this to taunt him, in view of his testimony that Elijah, his father and master in prophesy, had gone up to heaven. It was wicked in them, but if they were 'little children,' and he a good man, would he not more probably have taught them better? Were I to guess at the correction you will give, I should guess the 'two she-bears' only chased them. But I see you laugh, and you, no doubt, can explain it better."

Mr. S. "The error is in the translation, 'little children.' It should be, 'young men.' They knew they were taunting God's prophet, and such a display of divine fury toward them was necessary, lest the prophet's important mission should be wholly frustrated."

J. "I had ever viewed this as a blot on the character of God, but now I see in it both his wisdom and benevolence. Please give your view of Ex. ii: 22, 'But every woman shall borrow of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and ye shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters;

and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.' This seems to sanction the crime of borrowing with no intention to pay back. Is that its object?"

Mr. S. "For 'borrow,' read 'demand,' and the correction is made. God will ultimately avenge the right and reward the oppressed. The Hebrews had earned all they got. The master of both nations had a right to say that they should be rewarded, and he disposed their proud enemies to comply with the demand."

J. "2 Sam. xii: 31. 'And he (David) brought forth the people (the captives taken in war) that were therein and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron.' 1 Chron. xx: 3. 'And he brought out the people and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes.' I always try to interpret one passage by another, where one is difficult; but these conspire to increase the difficulty. Did David so cruelly violate the laws of nations, and of God, without divine rebuke? If the horrible idea I have of this were removed, I could embrace my Bible as a richer treasure."

Mr. S. "Nothing is easier than to remove that notion. The original says, 'he put them to saws, to harrows, and to axes.' In other words, made them, according to the laws of nations and of God, go to work."

"Thank you," replied the Judge with warmth, as he pressed the Bible to his bosom; and looking on his note-book, said, "another blemish bedims this precious jewel, in 2 Cor. ix: 1. 'Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God.' Apply here your luminous torch of Greek criticism and consume

this bit of dross, that the lovely feature here concealed may display its beauty."

Mr. S. "'Moreover, brethren, I inform you of the grace of God.'"

J. "Several Scriptures say Pharaoh hardened his heart; several others say the Lord hardened it. I think I have solved this, but wish to be confirmed, if right, and corrected, if wrong. The Jews seem to have expressed themselves peculiarly, in often declaring a thing done by him who only had it done, allowed it, or furnished the means of doing it. I think Pharaoh hardened his own heart, but God permitted him to do so, and gave him the very means, in the repeated renewal of his blessings upon him."

Mr. S. "I think you are correct, and it may confirm you to know that I have somewhere seen it stated, by a Hebrew scholar, that Hebrew verbs have a *permissive* mode of expression, and that the verb is always in that mode when the text reads 'God hardened his heart.'"

J. "1 Cor. i: 26. 'Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.' This can not be true as it stands, and is generally explained. The wisest, mightiest and noblest of earth have been the subjects of the lowly Jesus, and that in great numbers, and in all ages. Especially was this true in the days of the apostles. 'A great company of the priests believed on him.' But if *italicised* words are always supplied by the translator, I think I can correct this passage myself. Instead of '*are called*,' I would supply 'call you.'"

Mr. S. "I think the Greek and the connection will sustain you again. Paul is arguing against the employment of carnal philosophy, and flesh-pleasing trappings to win souls to Christ. 'See your own calling.' 'The weak are chosen to confound the mighty.' God chooses weak instruments to convert mighty men. The apostles were such, but their ministry was in power. Its excellency was manifestly of God. He was showing to the Corinthians the folly of trusting in pompous teachers, who gloried and flourished in the wisdom of men, and reminded them that those preachers, who used the foolishness of preaching the Gospel, were the only ones God blessed in the effectual calling of sinners, and in the edification of his people."

J. "Rom. v: 20. 'Moreover the Law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' I see no sense at all in this, nor have I ever heard it bettered by explanations attempted."

Mr. S. "In this you are not peculiar. I have consulted many commentators in vain for its sensible exposition. The translation would be more literal thus: 'Moreover it secretly crept in as a law, so that the offense hath abounded.' But still I am compelled to pass it, in a reverential consciousness of inability to fathom its meaning."

J. "Why, sir, your translation makes it as clear as light. I wonder you don't see it. The chapter shows the catholicity of the Gospel of reconciliation. As the sin of one man entailed depravity of disposition and even death on all, not excepting infants and idiots, who have not voluntarily sinned, as Adam

did, so the righteousness of one removes the curse of original sin, and secures infallibly all who stand in Christ by faith. But not only is the sin of Adam, called the sin of the world, to be taken away, but sin 'has crept into' the world 'as a law,' permeating the whole race of man; so that the offense of Adam, reproduced in every one of his voluntary descendants, 'abounds.' But the apostle immediately arrests and forbids the malevolent use of this truth, by the assurance that the entrance and prevalence of sin furnish opportunity to develop more fully the grace of God. Unfallen nature could know nothing of his grace. Degraded misery is essential to the display of mercy. Unfallen angels can not look into the deep mysteries of redemption. Paul vindicates God from the suspicion of malevolence in the permission of sin and death, by the truth that all who will may accept the Gospel, and rise higher in Christ than the unfallen angels stood. 'So that grace may reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

Mr. S. "I believe, sir, you have fathomed the depth, and nothing is more beautiful and affecting."

J. "No, sir; but you removed the rubbish by your translation, and the pent-up thought sparkled in the joy and glory of its freedom, and I only caught and rejoiced in its gleam of beauty. In Rom. viii: 19-23—'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption,

into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.' I have a dear friend who infers universal salvation from this, and I have studied it one whole week, that I might show him his error. I know universalism is opposed to the Bible, and this can not teach it, but unless I can show what this does teach, I can not persuade him to renounce his fatal error. I know the train of the argument, and it seems very clear and beautiful, till broken by the word 'creation,' in the twenty-second verse, and the word '*they*,' in the twenty-fourth."

Mr. S. "I feel rebuked by your zeal to understand this passage. For though there are about a dozen Universalists in my community, I am unable to explain this to them, and am ashamed to say I have never studied it more closely than to read it in the original, and consult all the expositors I could get hold of to find its meaning. The word 'creation' is the same in the original as 'creature;' and the word '*they*' is supplied by the translators."

J. "Thank you. That is now clear. 'Creature' is here four times employed to denote the body of every true believer, which is yet in the 'bondage of corruption,' having no part in the 'first fruits of the Spirit,' regeneration, and doomed to remain a 'body of death,' till the attainment of its anxiously awaited 'adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,' when, as a second fruit of the Spirit, it shall be raised,

pure and immortal from the grave. This will be 'the manifestation of the sons of God.' All shall then know who they are. The italic word '*they*' should be read *that*, and the connection will have no obscurity. The apostle's argument is to show the superior blessings peculiar to the justified. A skeptic is supposed to object that they suffer and die like sinners. Paul answers that their bodies are, with good reason, subjected to frailty for a while, but shall be redeemed from the bondage of corruption into an equal participation with their spirits in the blessings of salvation."

Mr. S. "Your interpretation of this is ample pay for my trip from Virginia. I have learned from you how important it is to study the Bible, almost alone, in order to understand it. You have enlightened me on two of the most painful difficulties I have found in the Bible. I want you to explain also Rom. ix: 28—'He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make on the earth.'"

J. "I have no light on that. If not involved in the rubbish of a bad rendering, I shall be forced to confess that, to my mind, it is a spot on the face of our moral luminary, the Bible. See if the translation can be varied."

Mr. S. "The last clause may be read thus: 'Short will the Lord make the work in this land;' or, 'The Lord will make the work short in this country.'"

J. "Well, sir, it could not be plainer. The 'work' to be finished is the covenant with Abraham, as the whole connection shows. God righteously cuts it short of the Jew's arrogant expectations. 'This

land,' means the land of Judea. The Jew contended that God, in making faith in Christ the medium of justification and salvation, suffered the covenant with Abraham to fall to the ground. Paul declares faith to have been the main condition of that covenant, and proves that righteousness forbids its blessings to unbelievers. The work will be finished by extending those blessings to all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles. I am glad you suggested this passage."

Mr. S. "And I more so. You have surely studied nothing else but the Bible."

J. "Nor *that* half so much as I should. Do tell me why our translation is not corrected? It seems to me that its errors must confirm infidelity. I can't help feeling an obligation to do something toward their removal. Why don't you do it yourself? It is as easy to remove an error as to detect it."

Mr. S. "More has been done in this way than you seem to be aware. Translations more or less perfect have been made, and published, by the individual labors of John Wesley, Geo. Campbell, Jas. Mac-knight, Doddridge, Lowth, etc., etc. They are not generally used, because they are individual labors, and have not the confidence of the public."

J. "It seems to me an evident duty of Christ's church, to take the necessary steps, for the correction of these errors, but we now have, on our minds, as much as we can do. But if Christians are ever united, it must be on a pure Bible."

CHAPTER IX.—*The Enemy of Truth.*

THE conversation having been interrupted for a while by the presence of company, and supper being over, the Judge and his guest, Mr. Smedley, returned to the all absorbing theme—the means of effecting a union of God's people on Bible principles. The Judge felt that whatever else was essential to the needed union, conversion certainly was. It had been a maxim with him, that, the Bible being the test, there are but few genuine Christians. He had, however, talked with a great many, and had come to the conclusion that causes, criminal in themselves, but beyond the control of individual Christians, were in existence, which chilled the zeal of many, who really had felt a work of grace. "In the days of my infidelity," said he, "I did not think more than one of every fifty, who professed religion, knew any thing of its power. I have looked at the matter in so many ways that I have somewhat changed my opinion. God's hosts are in confusion, and their hearts are dispirited. By consequence, they present a less powerful front to the enemy, just as an army arrayed against itself. To reduce these antagonizing powers to harmony, and to free their ranks from heartless traitors, are objects, whose attainment is essential to the world's conversion. Do you not regard the impiety of church members one of the most fearful barriers to the world's conversion?"

Mr. Smedley. "I do, and the disposition among all the sects to enroll names without reference to charac

ter is one of the most alarming features of the religious world. An unconverted church member is like a ravenous wolf admitted into the sheepfold. A pure church is the world's only hope for conversion."

Judge. "Do you not deem it very essential that all who enter the church first give the most conclusive evidence of conversion?"

Mr. S. "It is so important, that, in view of one man's influence, in the Corinthian Church, the Apostle declared, 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,' and advised that he be put from among them. Although that man proved to be a Christian, he was benefited by expulsion, and having given up his sin, he returned to the confidence of the church. A church with a few unconverted members is hard to move by the commands of God. They are enemies to God and to his cause, in just so far as it may require sacrifices of them. They take the privilege of neglecting every duty which to them seems unpleasant or unpopular. That God's Word enjoins it is with them no motive to obedience. Pride and self-interest are their mastering motives. Will it pay to be religious every day at home; to go to the prayer-meeting; to attend to the sick; to forgive injuries; to vindicate the laws of God and the ordinances of his church; to pray in secret and in the family; to deny ourselves for the cause of Christ? These and such are the questions which the unconverted ask, and when brought into the church, their disposition and practice are still the same. Such persons often have intelligence and wealth. Their influence is powerful in the assimilation of the really converted to their character; and the whole church

is less observant of divine command. Such influences conspire to teach sinners that there is no danger in disobeying God. It is like preaching to stones, to preach to sinners over such a church. The usefulness of a minister is soon lost and destroyed by his connection with such a church. He can scarcely destroy the power of his preaching and pastoral visits so soon in any other way as by taking into his church unconverted material.

J. "Our Reform preacher, this morning suggested that his church has no schismatic principles, and is on the very basis which we shall have to occupy. I told him I thought it was at fault in the most essential feature—in not requiring conversion at all. At my request he gave his own Christian experience. I told him very plainly but affectionately, that I would as soon have no experience at all. This led to a brief examination of his principles, and he professed to renounce them and I left him apparently in deep distress. I am hopeful of his conversion. In laying down our basis of union, will it not be very necessary to show the position which our religious parties respectively occupy in reference to it?"

Mr. S. "It will be sufficient, I think, to examine the distinctive features of the Presbyterians, Methodists, Reformers, and Baptists. The schismatic tenets of all other denominations can thus be made manifest. But great care must be used, or we shall wound their feelings. Principles held from choice and without good reason, as all schismatic principles are held, are more sacred to their abettors than those sustained by truth. A Presbyterian can

patiently hear one assail the perseverance of believers, because he knows the Bible sustains that doctrine; but say aught against infant sprinkling, and suddenly he is very mad. In the first case you censure the Scriptures; in the other, you censure his taste and his judgment. Did Pedo-Baptists and Reformers regard this principle, I think they would guard their tempers better, when their views are examined. We have had this remarkably illustrated in our town during the past year. Dr. Shuck, the Presbyterian preacher who visits our town two Sundays every month, debated with a Catholic. The priest declared it a most awful iniquity to give the eucharist, in both kinds, to the laity. But neither the Doctor nor his brethren seemed hurt. But some months ago he had occasion to preach on Baptism. He declared, among other incredible things, that immersion had never been heard of until the insurrection, by Thomas Munzer, in the sixteenth century; that its first abettors were outlawed, profligate, and abandoned. I heard of no Baptist who took offense. He protracted a meeting, and, by permission, I announced, at its close, that I had collected the testimony of fifty-five most learned Pedo-Baptist authors, which I would read from my pulpit on the next Sabbath, in answer to the Doctor's statement about immersion. The minister, and nearly all of his members were offended. He said he feared I wanted to stir up strife. At the appointed time, I only explained that Dr. Shuck had made such a statement, and I intended to get his own brethren to answer it. In reading, I only designated the denomination of each author, and mentioned his stand-

ing as a scholar. Our meetings, till then, had been attended by most of the Pedo-Baptists, but then only four or five were present, and they tell it that I accused their preacher of lying. We shall therefore have to be very nice about their feelings, or they will raise an opposition movement."

J. "From what you say, care will be no preventive. The truth offends them, and that is just what it is our duty to display, by tearing away every vail of error. We are, of course, to do it in the spirit of our Master, and then if they are hurt, we are clear of blame."

A knock at the door here interrupted the conversation, and Mr. Hall entered. After an introduction he made no ceremony of saying:

"I feel awfully gloomy and sad. I could not endure the loneliness of my study, nor that my family should know my situation. I have come for advice. I never knew how hard it was for a convicted sinner to believe on Christ. I still, as ever, believe he is the Son of God, the Savior of sinners, but I don't believe he is my Savior. Nor can I see how he can justly become such. I can't feel that his invitations are to me at all. I have deluded so many sinners by a false Gospel, I fear no mercy is for me. I know I have committed myriads of other sins, but in this alone, I fear I have cut myself off from God's favor forever. Saul did not so badly when he breathed out slaughter against the saints. He did not, could not, hurt their souls. But, alas! I have ruined all over whom my ministry has succeeded. Mine is indeed a hopeless case, and the worst feature in it, I think, is, that I have a hard heart. I can't feel contrite. O, sir, what shall I do.

J. "Why, my dear sir, you must not trust in *your* doing. Yours is a desperate case. Like all others in your situation, you can't help yourself. If not converted, all your sins are against you. Could you see their number and magnitude, you could not trust your doing. From five till forty years of age, you have lived in known sin, have discovered a depraved and sinful disposition. Each command of God has, at every moment, received its unyielding opposition. His prohibitions have been treated in the same way. Each moment of your life has been distinguished by as many sins as God has given commands, either expressed or implied, and each sin infinite, because in violation of an infinitely holy law, which requires perfect and perpetual obedience. To keep every precept but one, is to be guilty of all. 'He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all.' I wish not to distress you by the application of these awful truths. The duty grieves me, but while you cling to hopes of self-relief, the probe is needed to show that your wound is already immedicable by anything you can do. If I heal it slightly, I ruin you, and bring a curse on my own soul."

"O, sir," interrupted he, "there is the cause of my dread. Hundreds of times have I preached soul-destroying error to others, and I fear many have gone to hell deceived by me. But may not I hope forgiveness as Paul obtained it? I knew not what conviction was. I thought I was a Christian. I think I feel willing to do anything."

"But I tell you," said the Judge, in great tenderness, "that all you can do to better your condition,

will not avail any thing. The heart, the whole heart, is the first offering God can accept of a sinner. That you refuse to give. You must believe in Christ. To do so, you must lose confidence in every other source of trust. You are hoping to better your case, that it may be worthy of Christ. You may be trusting to your prayers."

"Indeed, sir," interrupted Mr. Hall, "I have no confidence in my prayers, for I feel that none of them have been heard. They do not rise above my head. Could I pray with faith, I should be relieved. But I have no faith. But I hope I shall have."

"From your own confession" said the Judge, "it is quite evident that you are hoping to benefit yourself. While you think it possible for any kind of prayer you can ever offer to benefit you, you are trusting to the prayers you *hope* to offer. Your case is too bad to be helped by prayers or tears, though you should weep rivers of tears. Look to Christ. The Poisoned Israelites were commanded to look to the Brazen Serpent. Had they refused, in the hope to better their own wounds, or delayed to have them hurt worse, they would not have been healed. Had I been there, urging them to look and live; and had they, as you do, complained that they did not *feel* deeply enough; I could only have pleaded the distressed condition of their wounds, and urged them again and again to look and live. It would, however, have been sinful in them to wait for any thing else than the command of God. God commands you to believe on Christ and live. While you delay, I must insist on the sinfulness of so doing. But I press it with all the earnestness of my heart; you

had better look to Christ in haste. Think of his ability—‘able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him.’ It does not say, ‘all who have not preached false doctrine.’ ‘He is able to save all that come to God by him.’ He is an Almighty Savior. ‘By him the worlds were made.’ Then, too, he is willing. ‘Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.’ He died for you and now lives to intercede. ‘Father forgive.’ Having such a Mediator, you need not bring your righteousness. He will be no partner in such honor as the salvation of a sinner brings. His fee is all the glory. He undertakes for no less and asks no more. Why not trust him? All your life he has followed you in love. To refuse or delay shows a rebellious heart. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God.’ We are by nature, ‘filled with all unrighteousness.’ What thousands of sinful thoughts! Of all these the mind must be emptied. Christ dwells only in clean hearts. He will have no place in your affections but the throne. Your sins intimidate your heart. If a man injures you he dislikes and distrusts you. You have grieved and injured the Savior, and now you naturally fear to trust him for pardon. Repentance is a part of reconciliation—and you must be reconciled to him before you can rely on him.”

“O, sir,” said Mr. Hall, “I know you tell me the truth, and hard as it seems, it is what I need, and am now willing to hear. But still I can’t understand what it is necessary to do. I feel willing to do any thing. Do you mean that I must believe Christ will save me?”

"Yes, sir," replied the Judge, "and that without any assistance from yourself."

"Well," replied Mr. Hall, with a heavy sigh, "if my salvation depends on *that*, I fear I shall be lost. I can't see how he could save me till I get rid of my sins. It would be unjust in him."

While the Judge gave these instructions Mr. Smedley was an attentive listener. By request of the Judge that he would illustrate for Mr. Hall the surrender of the heart to God, he said: "A converted Indian, in the absence of the interpreter, endeavored to explain to the missionary, without language, that he had found the Savior gracious, and how he did it, after long being distressed. Collecting a ring of dry leaves, he placed in the cleared area within the circle, a little worm, and then fired the circle of leaves. As they were burning the little worm made every effort to escape. But, met by the flame at every point, and driven back until exhausted with its vain efforts, it at length sought the center of the circle and coiled itself in submission. The moment it became still, the Indian picked it out, observing, 'dar poor Indian,' and lifted his eyes with tears of joy to heaven. It is not till our weakness is felt, that we can realize the power of God in our deliverance. Till we utterly distrust and cease from our own efforts, we can not feel our need, nor will he bless. The fiery law meets us at every point, till utterly driven from every hope of help in some untried means we propose to ourselves. Christ offers you a finished salvation. Your desire to improve it, or dispense with some of its provisions, is a dangerous sin. O, sir, there is so much hazard in looking to

self for one moment, I fear for you. Christ says, 'Come unto me.' You yet cling to something. It may be your expressed unwillingness to let your family know your situation. I know not. You must let go all. A house was in flames. A little boy, at an upper window, was shut in by them, as they rose through the stairway from below. He shrieked to his father, who rushed to his rescue. Extending his arms beneath him, 'Fall into my arms, my son,' cried he, rising on tiptoe, as if to snatch him from his place of danger. 'It is too high, father,' cried the boy, in weeping agony. 'I shall fall and be killed on the pave-stones.' 'No, my son,' shouted the frantic father, as the lambent flame began to pour through the window itself, 'your father will catch you.' With agony in his heart, and the words on his lips, 'I can only perish,' the boy toppled over. His father caught him safely. An omnipotent Father bids you fall into his arms, and do you still cling to the foolish hope of saving yourself? The fiery law pours its flames into your face. O, let go your sins and fall on Christ. But after all our efforts to simplify, it is the work of God to believe on Christ. To him let us pray."

J. "We will join you."

After prayer, they sung that Gospel hymn, beginning—

"Alas! and did my Savior bleed?"

And after prayer by Mr. Smedley, they sung—

"Arise my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fears!
The bleeding sacrifice
In my behalf appears," etc.

Mr. Hall then retired, still in deep distress. So much was his mind occupied by the fear, that his family and brethren would find out his condition, that he could not believe on Christ. Early the next morning, he left his family still not apprised of his situation, and was concealed until he appeared late in the services at the Presbyterian church. He was the personification of sadness. No explanation of his absence could be given to his disappointed congregation, except the satisfactory guess that affairs connected with the Union Convention demanded his presence elsewhere. Service was conducted without him.

The Baptist minister, a tall, slender, earnest looking man, was more remarkable for warmth than for depth of discourse. His theme was, the remarkable prayer-meeting—Acts ii: 1—"They were all with one accord in one place." He first pictured the circumstances under which that meeting was held—the sad countenances of the disconsolate disciples, as they grouped themselves on all convenient occasions to dispel each other's fears and sorrows. You would have thought you heard the sobs of poor, heart-broken Peter, as the denial of his Master came into his mind, and he abjured and bewailed his inconstancy. He then proceeded to contrast the unity and devotion of religious worship in that day with the cold indifference of the present, and to show the necessary effect of union in worship now—that Christian hearts are like firebrands, the closer together the better they burn; that it is better to be crowded together in a house barely large enough for the congregation, than to be scattered in a large

room; that a large army in confusion and scattered is easily put to flight, while a small one closely banded is dreaded by the enemy. After dwelling next, in a most impressive manner, upon the effect of that prayer-meeting, in conclusion, he softened his audience with earnest tears, and wrote these words imperishably on their hearts—"Suppose such a meeting now, 'all together in one place.' Ascend some elevation which commands the whole view. Your meeting-house is the gathering point. As the hour of worship nears, you see them in every street and lane, marching and gathering neighbors and friends as they go; saying, 'come and let us go up to the house of the Lord.' Each Christian hopes and prays for an answer to his daily prayers in the conversion of some loved soul. His soul is poured out within him. The sinner feels awed by the scenes around him. God is there, and he feels, and fears, and trembles. Now rises the minister of God. Fifteen hundred souls are present, instead of the two or three hundred here to-day. How crushing his sense of responsibility, as he stands as a mouth for God to so many. He forgets self. All pray for him, and God will answer prayer. Grace descends in copious showers. Not drunken with new wine, his people rejoice, and sinners weep. O, yes, my strange brethren, and they are weeping here to-day. Are not your hearts praying for them now? Mother, there is your daughter, with a tear in her eye. Father, see that noble youth, whose head bows with sorrow! Is he not your son? I know you are praying for him. And yonder is an old father, whose head drops as if with a sense of

guilt. Has he no daughter, son, companion, or neighbor to pray for him? God has said, 'when Zion travails she brings forth sons and daughters.' A sleeping mother never gives birth. O, for a spirit of agony to-day! Yonder go thoughtless people down to hell!" With this he rushed from the pulpit down into the aisle, still pleading with a trembling voice and tearful eyes: "Now, sinner, come to Jesus. Sweet word, 'come!' Let it ravish thine ear, and charm thee from the road to ruin. A waving crown in the Savior's hand invites thee to come. Make haste, sinner, ere the day of thy mercy be past, and thine ear be wrung with the harsh and grating word 'depart!' Let scores to-day seek the Lord. To the first invitation to the anxious, many responded. Mr. Hall sat trembling and weeping. But few understood the cause of his presence. After the first song, Mr. Sellers, with an impassioned appeal, renewed the invitation. Mr. Hall, who had sat reflecting, with bitterness, how often he had ridiculed the mourner in Zion, and the seat appointed for the anxious, resolved with himself, "God will not accept me till I am willing to undo all I have done wrong. I shall be lost if I longer regard the scoffs of my brethren and the disapprobation of my family. I will go if I perish and should be outlawed by all I love." And he arose and came forward, crying, "I beg every Christian's prayers. I have been a deceived man; but now I am undeceived by a consciousness of all my lifetime's guilt. I know I am unconverted." Many others arose and pressed forward. Many hoped in God's mercy. But poor Mr. Hall was more distressed than ever. He felt no

longer ashamed, nor afraid to let his brethren and family know his condition. That evening he came to the house of God a happy recipient of mercy. "I can tell you now, Mr. Smedley," said he, in a loud and distinct voice, and in front of the pulpit, "what it was that kept me back so long. It was hard for me to give up Campbellism, and I now see that if I had not done it I should have lost my soul. I was trying to reconcile it with the Gospel. And, oh! I felt that I could almost as soon die as give it up. But I thank God I have lost nothing by the sacrifice."

From the joyous scene at the house of the Lord in the forenoon, it is painful to conduct the reader to the camp of our enemy. His efforts to draw a crowd were not in vain. He is Mr. Sawyer, the man who could profess allegiance to the King of Zion, and at the same time declare it indifferent what a man believed, whether truth or error, and that we can be as good Christians in falsehood as we can in truth. Most of his spiritual members were at the Presbyterian church. His seekers and brethren of kindred spirit with himself were there, together with a number of persons who seldom ever went to church. They joined heartily in the laughs he excited by his witticisms as he would ridicule the Christian union that would be brought about on Judge Rolen's principles. And he truly did make a ludicrous farce of it, by representing all the members of the different sects in one church, Catholics, Unitarians, Mormons, and *close communion Baptists*. Then he would ridicule the mode of baptism held and practiced by the Baptists. He drew a picture

of a woman whom he pretended to have seen "ducked," as he called it, by the Baptists, and it was so laughable that several of his congregation laughed outright, and he could not advance for the effort required to suppress his own laughter. Toward the close he grew serious, and assailed the Baptists as bigoted, and denying that any are Christians but the Baptists. He fought the union movement through them all the while, as if he knew all would have to be Baptists if they were united on Bible principles. He wound up by blistering Bro. Mullens, Bro. Seely, and many others of his brethren whom he knew to be favorable to the union of Christians; capping the climax by saying he could not endure a union which would admit the Baptists at all. The reader will excuse the introduction of this notice, if he is a Bible reader and acquainted with the truth, that Godliness always has its persecutors. It had them in this instance as well as in all others.

The meeting was protracted at the Presbyterian church from day to day till Thursday. The house, though large, could not seat the people who crowded to hear. Never was such a time witnessed in L—. The stoutest infidels, who had scorned the religion of Jesus, and that in great numbers, were among those who sought the Lord and professed faith. Even Mr. Sawyer soon joined in the meeting, and shouted and carried on as though he had never wished it ill. But whenever he took a public part, it was seen to cast a damper. The best people in the town believed him capable of opposing any thing so long as it was popular to do so, and then

of advocating it. It was seriously feared he would offer himself to the Union.

Every sermon breathed an ardent love of truth. The notion "that it matters not what people believe, so they are sincere and good," was stripped of its plausible garb, and its genealogy traced to the "Father of lies." The individual responsibility of all God's people, for the existence of coldness and schism in religion, was made prominent. The duty to follow the Bible alone, in spite of human tradition, was also fully pressed upon the hearers.

CHAPTER X.—*The Neglected Truth.*

THE day has come. Its cloudless beauty and genial warmth adumbrate the brightness and power of that spiritual era, whose nativity shall make it immortal. The fame of the revival in progress had extended, and hundreds had reached the village on the day before. On the night previous, two houses were open for worship, but still the congregations could not be seated. This morning, at an early hour, the whole country, as if instinct with life, seemed heaving its eager thousands to the center of attraction. To picture the stirring interest of that day, would immortalize this chronicle. But it is impossible. Its like was never seen. The dramsellers had hauled together, on the public square, all their whisky barrels and intoxicating effects; and when each had lifted up his voice in thanksgiving to God for his own conversion, they burnt their offering on the altar of God and their country, while grateful hundreds made the welkin tremble with triumphal songs. This done, there was formed, without previous concert, a procession, which marched to the stand in the grove and as they went the sobs and cries of awakened hundreds were overpowered only by the swelling praises that rolled in joyous songs from the moving mass. Prayer and praise alternate rise, until the still gathering hundreds have filled the last seat. Every character and profession in Young America, perhaps, was represented there. The hour of ten had arrived. Mr. Sellers, in the Chair, arose and said:

"I have the pleasure of presenting to the assembled thousands, Judge Rolan, the converted Infidel and the Bible Union man."

How shall I chronicle the transporting interest of this memorable day, without a portrait of this wonderful man? But what limner can pencil the *earnest* orator? The speech itself, on silent paper, must want the mighty soul of its author. He spoke in earnest. A dissertation on the elements of his power could tell no more. He *believed* and *spoke*. After reading the whole of our Lord's prayer, offered just before his crucifixion, and recorded in the 17th chapter of John's Gospel, he said: "The 21st verse is the motto of my discourse: 'That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*' From this I wish to show that the world's conversion is suspended upon the union of God's people. The solemn circumstances under which this prayer was offered should induce a devout attention to every word. Death, and his mediatorial work on high, were about to remove the great Petitioner from his disconsolate disciples. As he impressed that sad, but glorious and important truth, and then lifted to heaven his tearful eyes and suppliant hands, think you that any present could restrain weeping? He prayed for the purity, union, and final glorification of all his people, and in all ages. There are none here to-day, whose names were not linked with those petitions, in the mind of our great Intercessor. Strange with what unanimity the sentiment of this text, so momentous and important in itself, has been overlooked by min-

isters. Are there any who ever impress it in their sermons? From my boyhood, it has struck me with peculiar force, that a divine religion would unite all its possessors. That Christians were not united, made me doubt the divinity of Christianity. I could not, it is true, be fully satisfied of its human origin: but it was as impossible for me to believe with all my soul, in its divine inspiration. It pleased God, just three years ago this day, by an awful stroke, in the removal of my companion by death, to break down my infidelity. I am now convinced that, though all men should prove false, this Book is true.

“I can not believe that Christians would be slow in forming a union, such as the text requires, if they were duly impressed with the weight of obligation requiring them to do so. A sense of duty lies at the foundation of all moral improvement, as is proved by that clause in this prayer, ‘Sanctify them *through thy truth.*’ Truth is the torch which lights the lurking places of sin in our souls. We must know our errors, or we may foster and be proud of them instead of striving against them.

I. “THE NATURE OF THE UNION HERE REQUIRED. The degree of its intimacy will be understood, if we can understand the union existing between the Father and the Son. ‘As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee. Here are no distinctive features. ‘I and my Father are one.’ So intimate is that union, that the personality of each is incomprehensible by us. It is one of the mysteries yet above us. But it is easy enough to deduce from it the lesson we need. It involves no antagonisms, no unfriendly

jars, no contentions, no opposition of interest or purpose.

"Such, also, is the union between Christ and the believer—soul to soul indissolubly united. 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' It is an eternal union. 'We were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.' Though our election was once future to us, it was not so to him. All things are eternally present with him. Hence, he has 'loved us with an everlasting love.' His purpose from all eternity united believers to Christ. 'In him we are complete. In that union is found all our loveliness in the eyes of God. It makes us 'dear to him as the apple of his eye.' To those out of Christ he is a consuming fire. We are chosen in Christ 'through sanctification of spirit and belief of truth.' The purpose of election is a work of eternity. Election itself is a work of time. It makes all its subjects one—unites their souls as drops of kindred fluid—binds them to each other with the cords of eternal love. In this union can be no conflict of purpose. Every purpose is to do the will of him who loved and redeemed us. This soul-union of believers is interrupted and seriously injured, in its power for good to its subjects, and to the world, whenever, through weakness or ignorance, they become subject to dissensions in the establishment of human schisms. They may thus be marked by divisions, strifes, conflicts of work, and heart-burning contentions. One only leader, recognized and obeyed, can guard against these disasters. Whenever we heap to ourselves leaders after the flesh, we are necessarily thrown into confusion, and all the horrors of schism.

“Perfect harmony, both of purpose and action, is what the Savior here prayed for—that the believer’s will be wholly lost in that of Christ—that no fetters of human society warp his purposes into conflict with his brethren—that every soldier in the holy army pour forth to the Captain of his salvation, the prayer, ‘Thy will be done.’ The believer is united to Christ as the branch to the vine, as the bride to the groom, as the members of the body to their head. It is impossible for this union to be destroyed. It is a union of souls. Its existence is wrought and perpetuated by the Spirit of God, whose life-giving energy permeates all the ‘body of Christ.’ The richness and marrow of the Gospel are displayed in its perfect manifestation. This union of the soul to Christ is the conduit of spiritual life in its most exalted state—it is the breeze of heaven, which fans into an intense glow the affections of all his people. The spiritual light and heat emanating from this glorious union, are intended to melt the obdurate hearts of the unconverted.

“But the outward manifestation of this union may be interrupted. Then, like fire on scattered brands, its glow is dimmed. With such union are eternally incompatible the religious sections of this day. They are all wrong. But one is the Church of Christ. All others are censurable factions.” By this is meant not that one is composed only of genuine Christians, and all others solely of the unconverted. There are, perhaps, genuine and spurious in all. But within the kingdom of Christ is only one system of laws, for the observance of his people, in the

creation of churches. His kingdom embraces all true believers, and none else. It is eternal and universal; that is, it embraces all who willingly submit to his government both in time and eternity. But this reign is spiritual. To creatures of sense its existence can be known only by visible tokens. To identify it for the enlightenment of men by the display of its laws, its Lawgiver ordained the establishment of the Church. He prescribes clearly the qualifications of church members, gives only one organization for churches, authorizes churches to be formed in sufficient numbers to suit the convenience of those desirous to display his laws. None is his church which has not his organization. The Church, in the legitimate exercise of its powers, is executive only, not legislative. It can neither enact nor abrogate a law. It is easily seen that many in Christ's kingdom may fail to enter his Church, and that many, out of his kingdom, may, by deceptive means, enter his Church. Many in his kingdom, may enter human churches, as all do who indorse as a feature of church organization, any thing not found in the laws of Christ. The harmonious administration of his laws by all his churches is essential to accomplishment of the designs of his kingdom—the sanctification of its subjects, and the conversion of the world. If one church transgress the limits of its powers, its neighbor churches should attempt, in a Christian spirit, to correct it. If they fail, they can only disfellowship its members and official proceedings. Fidelity to our king requires us to do this. If we do not, we indorse and shoulder

all the guilt of its transgressions. Let fidelity be branded with what hard names it may, yet still it is a duty.

“Baptism may be considered the vow of allegiance, by which one’s voluntary connection with Christ’s kingdom is publicly recognized. The Supper and the ministry of the Word are also ordinances of the kingdom. All in the kingdom are entitled to the first and second of these ordinances, and are in duty bound to observe them. The third is, by the discretion of the church, to be committed to suitable men. These ordinances are to be kept by the church, as they were delivered by inspiration. Paul says, ‘I praise you, brethren, that ye keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you.’ This implies the important duty of the churches to guard them from imposition. To give baptism to an impenitent unbeliever; or the Supper to a believer unbaptized; or to recognize, as a church, a body of such, would be to subvert the divine order. The recipient of baptism must give the fullest evidence of Bible qualifications to receive it. It makes him a member of Heaven’s earthly court—the church—and clothes him with all its dignities and privileges. He must be a loyal subject of the kingdom. To admit the unworthy, were to license a leper to inoculate the whole camp of Israel with the leprosy of sin. To give the Supper to one who repudiates the vow of allegiance, or recognizes and asserts the human right to change it, were to deny the sole right and capacity of Christ to enact laws for his own kingdom. To do so is the source of all schisms in Christianity.

“A religious schism is a church, with some principle or principles of organization, or terms of membership, not so clearly Scriptural as to obtain the assent of all Christians. Infant membership is one of these; baptism for the remission of sin another; communion by the unbaptized another, etc. There can be no disagreement in the features of organization, if they are taken from the Bible by all churches. But if human policy is allowed to stamp itself on the features of church organization, the number of schisms will be as various as the versatility of men. True and Bible-taught professors will indorse none but Bible principles. False, ignorant, and bigoted professors will array themselves, each according to his own fancy, under some human banner, and be very mad if asked for the Bible proof of his principles.

“It is not the purpose of this discourse to call together and unite all professors of Christianity. The Bible principles for the union of God's people, have, by divine purpose, an essential repulsiveness to the false, bigoted, and self-willed; but a glory and beauty which irresistibly charm and attract the genuine Christian. Bro. Smedley has the notion, erroneous, I think, that God's truth, when exhibited, will, unless sugared over with nectared words of soothing sound, wake and inflame the prejudices of some of his people, so as to drive them into an attitude of hostility. I may be mistaken, but I think very differently. I think every Christian who is made to see the Bible basis of Christian union, will flee to it from the crushing evils of schism, as the man-slayer to the city of refuge. The very shibbo-

leths of Zion seem intended to detect and to deter the hypocritical and the unworthy. I say not that all such will be effectually deterred. I fear thousands will defile the livery of heaven in slavery to the devil. But these tendencies exist, and seem divinely appointed. 'Infidelity has often asked, Why so many antagonisms under the name of Christianity?' It is often answered, 'I thank God there are so many different churches. Each Christian can gratify his taste in the selection of which he prefers.' I stand here to-day as God's witness that this sentiment comes smoking from the infernal pit. Some fiend in angelic costume breathed it in soothing cadences into the unsuspecting ears of some misguided divine; and bursting from his trance, in irresistible enthusiasm, he stuck it in his theological labyrinth, to light his name to the latest posterity. Read and urged in connection with our Savior's prayer, that we all may be one, that the world may believe, it is the outpouring of soul-hatred to God and man. But it most generally emanates from inconsiderateness, and proves ignorance instead of hatred to God and man. The variety of Christian taste alluded to, is wholly imaginary. No one is a Christian till his taste is one with God's will. If he has one preference which can not yield to the Word of God, it proves absence of conversion. The moral taste is what conversion changes, and harmonizes with the will of God. In human taste is almost infinite variety; in Christian taste the most perfect unity. On this sophism, therefore, can not be based a valid plea for a plurality of conflicting church organizations for Christians. The union our Savior prayed for can require

nothing less than that all his people adopt the same organization, though in private principles or sentiments, such as are not involved in church organization, each one having the Spirit of the Lord, is at liberty to form his own judgment, as he may have opportunity and capacity to study the Bible. The principles of organization are few and simple, and clearly taught in God's Word. We are to recognize 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.' In recognizing 'one Lord,' we deny the right of any law-making power but that of Christ. The decisions of councils, the ordinances of Popes, and the injunctions of divines, derive all their force to bind the conscience from their seen consistency with Christ's laws. That is, they have no influence at all. To acknowledge their influence is to reject Christ's. For even if we obey him for man's sake, and not for his own, we reject him in the very act. To have 'one faith,' is to receive only those who believe in Christ, and give in holy dispositions and good works the fruits of that faith, without which it never exists. To hold 'one baptism,' is to practice, to the utter rejection of all others, the one Christ enjoins, and unaltered in its mode, subject or design; that we receive all its consequences, and deduce its consequences from nothing else. As it guarantees to its worthy recipient all the immunities of church membership, and eligibility to any office in the gift of the members, we are to deny them to none, until wicked conduct vitiates the title acknowledged in the bestowment of baptism. Then all are to be withheld. To deduce the right to church privileges from something else, as, for instance, from a declaration

that we are Christians, or from the consistency of our deportment, is to undervalue the position and importance of baptism, as enjoined by our Savior.

“From these remarks it is plain that a Gospel church exhibits, and can not exist without, these five features. First. The Bible is its only faith book, or authoritative source of appeal in doctrine and discipline. Secondly. Its candidate for baptism is a new creature, regenerated by God’s Spirit through the belief and obedience of the Gospel with the whole heart. Thirdly. The mode of baptism is immersion. Fourthly. Its design is obedience to Christ from a principle of love. Fifthly. When received from a Gospel church it is the recipient’s divinely authorized passport to the fellowship, communion, and privileges of the church.

The union for which our Savior prayed, is impossible on any other basis than this. All churches which incorporate principles at variance with these are sectarian. All Christians can preserve a good conscience in uniting with one of these, but in uniting with one of different principles, a woeful amount of ignorance is necessary to keep the conscience easy. If these principles are true, it is very plain that all the denominations of our community are sects. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith is, I believe, sound on most points. Most of its views will be pronounced correct by an advanced Bible scholar. But because its doctrines have to be indorsed by all its subscribers before they can know whether they are Bible doctrines or not, even those views which are tenable, are barriers to the consciences of young Christians. Unless they determine blindly to in-

dorse them, they can not join that church until they are far advanced in age and Bible knowledge. There is a very small proportion of Christians who can trust men so far as to indorse, as Bible truth, all that they set forth as such, without knowing it to be such. And hence a small proportion of Christians can join the Presbyterians. The infallibility of their principles is the more liable to suspicion because some of them never can be indorsed by independent, conscientious, Bible-reading Christians. Presbyterianism has lost the best men it ever had and in great numbers, because increasing Bible knowledge showed the Popery of infant sprinkling, and of adult sprinkling.

“Neither can this union take place with the Methodists. Similar reasons to those already given are more numerous with them. But it has been alleged that they are so liberal that one may do or be almost what he pleases and still be a Methodist. This will not do for the union point of Christians. With some characters quality of society is indifferent. But the truly pious are select in their notions. Heaven’s grand attraction is that ‘the wicked cease from troubling.’ They are unwilling that a single leper roam at liberty in the camp. They fear the infection. Methodism invites them by thousands.

“Nor will Campbellism do for this union basis. But Mr. Hall, the pastor of that church, who, within a few days, has been led to see the dangers of his system, and to renounce them, and to seek the Lord, as a lost sinner, agrees to make good my objections to Campbellism, as the basis of Christian union, and I will not urge them.

"I have taken less pains to learn how things are in the religious world than to learn how they should be. But I have learned that many, even hundreds of religious parties exist now and have existed, all claiming to be churches of Christ. I have heard it announced by our chairman of to-day, and he will agree, though he has now renounced the sentiment, that the ministers of his church, the Presbyterians in general, do affirm, in view of all these sects in religion, that they are characterized by the union our Savior prayed for. It is said, 'all are united in the purpose to do good and to get to heaven.' I learn that the sects have, in nearly every age of the Christian era, rolled their garments in each other's blood; that Presbyterianism itself, the noblest of all these schisms, was cemented to its foundation rock, Romanism, by the blood of Servetus. But its zealous abettors will not read and know these things for themselves. I fear they will be content to accuse me of falsehood, for telling the cheek-bleaching truth.

"Such antagonisms can not represent the union between the Father and the Son, nor will considerate Christians believe they answer our Savior's prayer for the union of his people. We have seen and felt their influence in our day and country. A meeting for the conversion of sinners is held. It matters not by what sect. All the others feel but little obligation to give it their influence. Those who believe it is by a sect that ought not to exist dare not, for conscience' sake, encourage it by their prayers or influence. Regarding Presbyterianism a sect, if I were to pray for its advancement, I should

pray for schism in the body of Christ to be perpetuated. If Mr. Smedley's church is a sect, and we have during the powerful revival which has been advancing under his preaching for several days, been praying for it to be built up, our prayers have been very censurable. It is impossible to unite the prayers and efforts of God's people in a sectarian movement, and on this account but little good attends the labors of our preachers.

II. From THE NATURE, let us turn to THE IMPORTANCE of the union our Savior prayed for.

1. *He would not have prayed for it now*, if it had been unimportant. The fountain of his love could not now vent itself through small channels. The subordinate elements of their well-being are swallowed up and for the time concealed in the all-comprehensive points of his petitions for the purity, unity, and glorification of his people. There is no possible good, but it is embraced in one or another of these points. Could his earnest soul have indicted a vain petition? Could he have wasted words in unmeaning phrases then? Surely, every clause of this prayer, however neglected by the ministers and schisms of the present day, was stirred from the deep heart of the all wise and compassionate Savior. If the father's richest blessing is breathed on his family, when he is about to close his eyes in death and see them no more; if the mother's remembrancer to her son, as he leaves the parental roof to seek his fortune on the sea of temptation, is the jewel she holds nearest her heart; if the farewell words in which we imprint, on the hearts of departing friends, our counsels and warm regards,

are the most solemn and impressive we can select; would he 'who loved us, and gave himself for us,' have left his dying token in an unmeaning prayer? No! His dying love unsealed its deepest fountains, and displayed its richest mementoes to the beloved ones he was now to leave.

Every word was important, and should be embalmed in grateful consideration and affectionate remembrance. Do you ask an argument to prove the importance of Christian union. Let it suffice you that Christ prayed for it when his 'hour was come.' Whether to gratify a desire like human ambition, in the harmony which should bind his people together, as animated by the Spirit of their only recognized Master, or to fling abroad the unscattered splendor of that moral radiance of which Christians are made the depositories and the reflectors, or to secure to the world some other concealed but important blessing, inseparably connected with its existence; whatever might be the purpose of our Savior in offering this prayer, it should suffice us that his wisdom and his benevolence offered the petition that 'we all might be one.'

2. "*The end to be attained by this union* shows it important. 'That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' The purpose of the four Gospels was to prove Christ's Messiahship. To believe that with all the heart, and in all its consequences, is to believe the Gospel. 'He that believeth not' the Gospel 'shall be damned.' On this union are, therefore, seen to hang consequences vast as an eternity of universal happiness. Our Savior has, in effect, said, 'if my people become arrayed into schisms under men, each

after his own fancy, and do not harmonize in the display of my laws, but form antagonizing sects, the world will not believe my Gospel. Infidelity will grow rank and scoff at the Gospel. Preachers will lose its unction and the world its saving power.' It is highly probable that the millions who die unconverted owe the instrumentality of their damnation to the disunion of Christians. Prophecy mentions as one of the concomitants of the 'latter day glory,' that the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and speak the same thing. It is a startling thought that nearly eight hundred millions of our race plunge into hell every thirty-five or forty years through the influence of an evil which Christians originate and prolong. The bare possibility of our censure in this matter ought to awaken in each individual here to-day the most earnest and attentive inquiry. It is reasonably estimated that eight hundred millions of our race die without sound conversion every thirty-five years. Every year that amounts to 22,857,143. Try these figures, and see how many die Christless every day. It is 62,451 per day. Your pulse does not beat more than 86,000 times in twenty-four hours. Now, what are these whose destruction we are counting by thousands in a single day? Are they golden eagles, royal crowns, cities, empires? No! they are units, each one of whose value would stagger and confound the mightiest thought to grasp and estimate the number of Golden mines in which it might be expressed. Worlds on countless worlds were weighed down by the value of one soul, and yet, my brethren, there is that in your position as Christians, which helps to drown them in hell by

thousands in a single day. Awake and bethink you how to remedy the evil!

3. *The nature of religion shows the need of this union.*

It is not something tangible, whose worth can be discovered by an exercise of the senses, or of the intellect. It is spiritual. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Gorgeous feasts and triumphal marches neither herald nor unfold its charms. Its sacred manna must be tasted, or its sweets can not be understood. Its glorious arcana must be entered and explored, or they are mysteries still. It is a splendid temple, whose beauty and glory are within. The passer-by can catch no glimpse of its excellences. Its exterior is unsightly and repulsive. To one only watchword do its portals open. This word the Master alone can communicate, and he always gives it in a whisper heard not in the bustle of life, nor in the ante-room of impenitence, but at the secret shrine of his own audience chamber. The candidate enters not in the garments of his own righteousness. Self, with all it holds most dear, must be renounced. The Heart-searcher allows no mental reservation. In the shameful consciousness of ill-desert, and in the dread of His holy and scathing frowns, the soul must go naked into the brightness of His presence. Recourse on all else must be sacrificed ere admission can be gained. Thousands have struggled long to find access without renouncing all. Here is the soul-struggle implied in the important command, 'Agonise to enter in at the difficult gate.' And here the reason why 'many seek to enter in, and are not able.' The soul must bargain, deed, and convey away all its love, and all power to re-

claim, before entrance can be had. The vail that covers the pearl he must sell all to buy, is never withdrawn, to reveal its priceless value, until the bargain and assignment are unalterably made and forever sealed. The purposes of the heart must be discerned and approved by the Porter, ere the door opens to the candidate. We must renounce all for Christ. Blind Bartimeus must throw aside his blanket, ere the Savior will receive him. 'He came not to call the righteous.'

"The sinner thinks a cloud of vengeance is over the Savior's face. The vail of sin permits him to see no inviting smile. He halts and trembles. 'I would venture; but oh! my sense of guilt says those inviting promises were never meant for me. If I venture, I shall perish. To sign away my all were only to commence my eternal misery the sooner. I dare not hope any better, for this I deserve, and the Judge of all the earth will do right.' Now, what can encourage this surrender? The offered enjoyments are spiritual. He is carnal and can not discern their value. To him they are like jewels in the esteem of swine. These he despises, while earth's pleasures he loves with a devoted heart. Now, what will satisfy him that the renunciation and change will not ruin him forever? God's witnesses must testify in harmony. They are supposed to have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious. One jar or conflict in their testimony awakens the sinner's doubts. There is a patient at death's door. The only remedy is almost as severe as death. A hundred witnesses of its infallible power are summoned to convince the dying man it will save him.

"They dispute about the manner of its application. What one advises another declares will kill. While all admit the efficacy of the remedy when rightly used, they discourage the patient from trying it from a fear that it would make his wretched condition worse. All agree that he dies because he would not try the remedy. Those friends are grieved; but how could they harmonize in their testimony, while their opinions honestly differed! One will say, 'he should have tried the remedy in disregard of their contentions.' True; but the state of his disease was such that their disagreement kept him from trying it. The sinner, too, needs the united testimony of all God's people to encourage his surrender to God. He finds them devouring each other in unholy antagonisms. While this does not weaken his obligation to give up his sins and press to the Savior, it strengthens his vicious disinclination to do so. But if all testify how sweet the joys of religion are, how richly they reward the surrender of earthly good, and they are seen to bind together with cords of love all who taste them; the sinner even in all his blindness, will feel constrained to give up all for them.

"I would not seem to disparage the sovereignty of God in bringing sinners according to his own purpose; for that sovereignty hath absolutely ordained the means, and a desire to dispense with them is no less than an affectation to destroy his sovereignty itself. Submission is the subject's first duty. To study the reasons of his sovereign's will is an after duty and privilege. To end a dangerous hesitation in this instance, I would only advert to such reasons as may be manifest. God requires our

union to bring the sinner; and to encourage his surrender to Christ.

“Having made the surrender, and entered God’s audience chamber, where he hears the whispers of love in which his adoption is declared and ratified; where his nakedness is covered with a robe of spotless purity; where the riches of his inheritance are unveiled to the eye of faith, and health and gladness invigorate and reassure his trembling spirit, he then knows for himself that the Lord is gracious, and there is advantage in praying unto him. But till the sinner comes to this point, he is in darkness; he knows not what he does in despising the Lord; needs to be led. Spiritual pleasures are to him like nonsense. Like the swine he keeps his eyes on the earth. If he ever looks up, a cloud of sin veils from him the glories of the sun of righteousness. He feels not their soul-ravishing splendor and power. God has appointed a compensation for this disinclination to look directly to Jesus. As the moon floats ever in the dazzling effulgence of the sun, and is bright with a borrowed splendor, which she flings in mellowed radiance upon us, even when the huge bulk of earth has rolled between us and the sun himself, so Christians are illuminated by the light and glory which beam on them from the Sun of righteousness, and they walking ever amid the sinners of earth, cast that mellowed light in inviting softness on those who will not look to the Savior. And thus, like the revelation of the incomprehensible Deity manifest in flesh, the mysterious spirituality of religion incarnate dwells among men. It is thus that we may behold, study, admire, and embrace the religion we should,

as sinners, never notice or desire, if it were not thus brought down to our comprehension. Even then, indeed, it is hard for the blinded sinner to give up all for it.

“Now, let all God’s people, those luminaries he hath lit to chase off the gloom of earth, pour their blended light upon the darkness which surrounds sinners; and what wonders must be wrought! O, would not these moral clouds be dispelled, and the divine effulgence poured in undimmed glory around us? The thought that this gloom is the deeper for our divisions, should make us pant and sigh with impatience for the knowledge how we may aid in overcoming it.

“4. *The nature of man* requires the union of Christians in order to the world’s conversion. He is a creature of sense—in a world of sense—influenced mainly by objects of sense. The constant and intimate presence of these renders difficult the exercise even of his intellectual powers. Abstractions require effort. Sensible objects and images write their unbidden impress on the mind. Religion is eminently an abstraction. Seclusion from all exciting scenes and cares is essential to the exercise of faith; and its daughter, Hope, is most cheerful when quietly attended by Meditation. We must court the influence of abstractions. We can scarce resist that of sense. Hence man is as the company he keeps; takes character from his relations, and from his vocation. Theory is comparatively powerless. Example is the talisman of moral assimilation; the alchemy that fashions what it touches. Atheists and materialists, in practice, belie their own theories. Abstractions are weak when opposed by the power of sensi-

ble motive. If sense thus beclouds intellect even when the objects of its exercise may all be agreeable to depraved nature, how much more will it mar the study of our moral relations, which depravity has cursed us with a proneness to despise! Christianity is eminently spiritual; has nothing sensible but its badges, baptism, the supper, its ministry and its duties; reveals a spiritual God; gives spiritual life; offers a spiritual heaven; as its only earnest, gives the spirit of adoption; puts no visible difference between the Christian and the sinner. Its joys are all spiritual, and though they be high as heaven, the unconverted can not understand them. Hence a creature of sense prizes not these spiritualities. They are foolishness unto him, because they are spiritually discerned. As already observed, they demand a renunciation of sensible pleasures.

“Man suspects them insufficient to pay the cost of their purchase—the sacrifice of the heart’s dearest objects. These abstract motives of religion are to overcome the more strongly loved objects of sense. If we lay Calvinism out of the way—as we generally do when we consider the obligation of human works and recur to it for the purpose of giving all glory to God—the ramparts to be assailed are too strong for the powers which storm them. Sensuality disqualifies the sinner to estimate the value of religion. The glories of an immortal future are eclipsed by the glare of painted gewgaws. The loved and the possessed jewel must be renounced as the price of the untried, the suspected and the despised. The loved pleasures of sin must be expelled from the heart, ere the sweetness of heavenly comfort can be tasted. A

partial surrender were fruitless as none at all. There is no middle ground. Though he who has surrendered never regrets ; he who has not, still trembles and fears to venture. He can not taste the sweets of pardon to aid that surrender. Faith only can light the darkness into which the leap is to be made. How hard to believe him we hate ! What concentrated power of Christian testimony is needed that the leap will not be made in vain ! How deep the soul-struggle in which the resolve is made, 'I will go, and if I perish, I perish ! I will trust him, though he slay me !' Consc̄ious guilt precludes assurance of acceptance. Apprehensions intimidate the soul. O, how solicitous to learn if Christians repent the change ! He anxiously marks their conduct ; their devotions ; their pleasures. Led to question by their unbrotherly conduct, their dissensions and their strifes, he wavers. In the subsidence of awakened concern, sin tightens its fetters. The strong man armed, retakes the palace. The tyrant, sin, as a pitiless murderer, smothers, and seeks to crush every hopeful resolve. The dominion of the being is again surrendered to the Prince of darkness, and to the dangers of impenitency. Christians are revived and brought together. A blaze of unsmothered piety reveals the darkness and dangers of his impenitency. Christians, in sorrowful deplorings of former coldness and neglect, bury sectarian strife. They warn the sinner, and his renewed struggle becomes intense. He feels the power of their influence, but still loves his suspected pleasure. Every subterfuge is sought, and darkness more than all others. Gladly would he calm his aching heart with a soothing opiate. But every

earnest Christian he meets sends the arrow of conviction deeper. He finds a sectarian, who, fearing that if he should be converted, he might join some other sect than his own, treats lightly his sense of distress; neither prays for him, warns him, nor instructs him in the way of life. Again his convictions die. A few such alternations, and his soul is stupefied forever, and Satan gains his victim. But why? It is granted he was too wicked to believe the gospel. The responsibility and wickedness rest on his own head, where God has placed them. But the tender hearted Christian asks again, *why did he not believe?* He had evidence enough to make him responsible, but not enough to make him believe. I discard not the glorious truth that conviction, compunction, repentance and faith are all fruits of the Holy Spirit, and can not be produced by the combined power and harmonious influence of men and angels, but since God has been pleased to appoint the means in whose efficacy his own power shall be magnified and glorified, we dare not set aside those means and expect the ends without them. I repeat it; though he had God's Word, yet he hated God, and feared to trust him. By the schisms and consequent errors and strifes of Christians he was led to doubt the genuineness of religion. The carnal mind is enmity against God; and the heart only wants an apology. He is ruined. But the Christian heart is not wholly relieved by the truth that he is his own destroyer. It is pained by the remembrance of any neglect of means to lead him to Christ. Christians loved, pitied and warned him so little that he suspected their religion, and thus healed a wound which

properly nursed and probed by united Christian effort, would have driven him to the soul-physician.

“‘When Zion travails, she brings forth sons and daughters.’ Christian Union tends to bring the Church up to that state of travail. ‘As iron sharpeneth iron, so does the countenance of man his fellow.’ The mingling of kindred hearts warms their devotions. The sun’s collected heat will melt the most infusible metals. The earnest heart is like the tearful eye: it draws sympathy from the most unfeeling. Were all united there would be earnestness; and such as few could resist. The militant hosts of Christ would then have no reluctant soldier—no halting or timid company. All would harmoniously respond to the watchword of the great Captain. New courage and devotion would nerve every heart. To all would belong the same interests—the same name—the same Captain—the same meeting-house, the same preacher—the same Sabbath-school—the same prayer meeting. They would unite their whole influence for good.

“Under such circumstances every heart doubles its boldness. The very scene animates the whole Church. Crowds attend public worship where now hundreds and thousands stay away. Instead of agitating for a time the question, ‘Whither shall we go to hear the Gospel and worship God?’ and then declining altogether, they have to decide between going and not going. Hence all are apt to go. Many attractions for the million are in the undivided crowd. The church and the minister, instead of half-pausing to decide whether or not to give up in despair, are aroused and inspired to earnest effort by the presence

of the crowd who seem to have surrendered themselves to their influence. Beautiful and attractive indeed is Zion, and terrible as an army with banners. No fears of rivalry swell the heart with jealousy and pride to chill the general ardor.

"Such influence hath God appointed to convert the world. A fearful cataract of wide-spreading waters, sweeping before their violent and irresistible might, every natural obstruction, may illustrate the power of such influence in bearing down the ramparts of sin, breaking the fetters which bind the heart to its iniquities, and in pressing the reluctant soul to Christ. To resist it, man's nature must be changed. Fiends only, it should seem, would remain unmoved and incorrigible. Christians, like gathered firebrands, glow and burn with heaven-inspired zeal. The moving weight of influence gathers momentum by its own action. The very citadels of sin, in the breasts of the wicked, are stormed and demolished by the holy violence which moves and sweetly compels sinners to the Gospel feast. They are captured for the Prince, through the love of his subjects.

"Such influence must be superadded to God's Word for the world's conversion, because He requires it. He has ordained the influence, promised the power of his Spirit to accompany its exertion, constituted man such that he needs it, and that when all are combined, he will be saved. Yes, this is the cable which Divine love hath manufactured, and drops into the pit of moral ruin to lift man from his deep woe to a shining estate in Heaven. Who, then—O, in the name of weeping mercy—who would willingly, with the sharp knife of schism, cut that only cord? It is

the alarm to a slumbering world to prepare to meet God. Who would muffle that sound, and thus seal the death-sleep forever? It is the elixir of life to the dying. Who would deny it to the expiring patient? Not he who loves the Savior, or souls that are dying. Never!

"5. *The work of the Church* requires the union of God's people. Not only is needed a concentration of influence, prayer, and love that can never exist without union; but also ministers and money to accomplish the mission of the church. These facilities are curtailed by disunion, while the demands are proportionately increased.

"There is an increased demand for *money*. Instead of one common interest, a plurality of conflicting interests are to be sustained, each at immense cost. Our village, for instance, numbers over 2,000 inhabitants. We have Presbyterians—Old School and New School—Methodists, Episcopalians, and Reformers. After diligent inquiry, I have learned that the Presbyterian church building cost \$14,500; the Methodist, which is just completed, \$17,000; the one the Reformers are building will cost about \$12,000. The Episcopal house is old, but fine, and is worth at least \$12,000. The New School Presbyterians have none at all. The first of these will seat only about 500 persons; the second, 642; the third, 960; and the fourth, about 610. In churches, therefore, our village has invested the amount of \$55,000. And there being 1,264 white inhabitants over six years of age, no house in town will hold them all. Now, unite all the Christians, and destroy sectarian pride, which would be done by that movement, because

there would be no sectarian rivalry, and with \$15,000 I will build a good, comfortable church, that can seat 2500 people, and it shall be so plain as to invite the poor as well as the rich. Our town will then be better supplied with room for public worship than now, and \$40,000 will be saved for other religious purposes. Nor is this all. It takes, on an average, \$1,600 to keep all these houses supplied with sextons, fuel, light, Sabbath-school libraries, etc., etc. Six hundred dollars would meet the annual expenses of the large house I would build. This would save \$1,000 per year, which is now misspent. The \$40,000 at ten *per cent.* would yield \$4,000 per year. Add the \$1,000 saved from house-keeping, and we have \$5,000 annually wasted, in only two ways.

“Now, estimate the cost of preaching. Pride of party here also does its work. One thousand two hundred dollars per year would easily sustain a minister and his family in our village. But there are four living among us, and sectarian pride requires their houses, their wardrobes, and their tables to be more costly than need requires.

“The Presbyterians pay their preacher \$1,600, the Reformers give theirs the same, and the Methodists give theirs \$1,800. The New School Presbyterians give a preacher \$400 to come twice a month and preach for them in the Court-house. The Episcopalians give theirs \$1,500. Preaching annually costs us \$6,900. Allowing \$1,200 to pay the preacher who should fill the large house, we save again \$5,700. Making in all, \$10,700, which would annually be saved, and every religious party be supplied with preaching which is not now the case.

"It may be said that while these figures suit our wealthy community, they will not apply to many other places. But they will serve to illustrate the principle, even more forcibly, in poor communities, where all the strength is required to build one house and sustain one preacher. Schism, then, makes us waste \$10,700 of our Lord's money annually!

"Nor is this all. Ours is a reading community. We have three booksellers. They have sold, during the last twelve months, \$804 worth of controversial books. These, too, are the fruits of schism. They could not otherwise exist. The time employed in reading a bad book is worse than wasted. It is murdered. From our postoffice have been taken only a fraction under \$1,000 worth of denominational papers and periodicals. These are the organs of their several schisms. It is impossible to compute the loss of piety which the belligerent spirit of all these entails on their readers.

"There are six endowed denominational colleges in our State, numbering altogether 1,143 students, and 147 professors, who might all be preachers, I suppose. These colleges and their endowment funds amount to \$3,200,000. Were all these students in one college—as they might be, if Christians were all united—they would require, allowing twenty students to each professor, only fifty-eight professors. The interest that would thus be saved in one year would be over \$200,000. These figures are required by schisms.

"The great cause of Missions, too, is crippled by schism. This demands our richest offerings. The wailing cry of dying millions from every region bids

us, 'Come over and help.' I know not how much our people give to send Bibles and ministers to the heathen; but from the calculations already made, we could, if it were not for schism, give annually \$10,700 more than we do to the cause of Missions. Then, upon the efficiency of what is thus devoted, schism makes another awful encroachment. Different agencies, publishing houses, Bible translators and colporteurs are to be sustained. Each organization has to buy and propel its own machinery for raising and appropriating money for the printing and distribution of religious literature. Nearly a fourth is thus required to oil machinery—so that only a small part of what is given bears directly on the objects for which it is given. Who does not shudder in view of these startling truths!

"But worse still. The demand for *ministers* is increased, while the supply is diminished. Five ministers are required in our village. Were all God's people united, one preacher could do more good than all do now—would secure greater harmony of effort in every good enterprise.

"When he undertook a good work, he would not need to overpower the opposing influence of four rival preachers and their members. They would not turn their influence against the impressions for good which might be made by the Gospel. Now it is otherwise. Let one denomination begin an effort for good, and the others feel in conscience bound to discourage it. The minister who leads the effort is dispirited. One pulls down, while another builds up. This distracts the sinner's mind. He can not believe these antagonisms are produced by the self-same

Spirit and the same Bible. He is nerved against all efforts for his good. If all considered the same minister their own, he could exert a far better influence.

"He could preach to all the people within two miles of his church. There would not be needed half so much pastoral visiting as now; because at least half the pastor's visits are generally employed in removing from the minds of some of the members the persuasion that some other religion will do better than the one to which he belongs.

"Schism is a fruitful source of proselytism. Ignorant members have many difficulties thrown into the way even of holding undoubted truth. They are apt to suggest these to their pastor, that he may remove them. There is less sense of the Divine presence generally felt by the pastor and his members while thus engaged, than if in the effort to gain a higher sense of God's grace in the heart. More time is required in pastoral visitation. The pastor could, if all were united, by the aid of seven or eight deacons, supply sixteen square miles with ministerial labor. The other four preachers could each, in like manner, supply a country district of eight miles square. But now, in each district of that size, from three to five denominations are struggling for existence. They can't sustain a prayer-meeting or a Sabbath-school without uniting. They can not unite for a Sabbath-school, because they have, at different and distant points, to attend preaching. Each sect has so few children, and so few teachers, that it has not the heart to keep up such an enterprise. None have regular preaching of their own doctrine on every Sabbath. They have, for reasons

before shown, but little prayer or sympathy for other sects. Their preachers are stinted in their support. More than half of them waste their unction of soul in devotion to other pursuits for a living. They seem not to be sensible that God thus punishes their neglect to give prominence to the great and neglected petition of the text. But do I not speak at hazard when I say, 'God punishes them?' They rather plunge into a labyrinth of evils involving their own punishment. Not only is increased the demand for ministers, but the supply is diminished. Sectarian pride recoils at the stammering of a beginner. Our gifts, like the hidden talent, rust, and are often lost, in the consequent disuse. We lose the sense of obligation to make preachers, in the fear of sectarian scoffs at their beginning. We often send them to college untried, and have them learn the preaching trade. Without the unction of a call, and a heavenly inspiration of earnestness, they are weights to their office, and curses to their churches. The great passion for a talented ministry, awakened by sectarian pride, keeps from the sacred work many of God's chosen vessels of mercy, until age begins to mark their decline.

"The sentiment is, 'We don't wish a preacher unless other sects will envy us on his account.' Not only does this keep many from the ministry, but it hinders our prayers for those we have. We are too proud of their talents to fear they will fail; hence do not pray for them to be sustained. Nor are we fully sensible how much they need the aid of our coöperation. They are thought sufficient for all things.

"Consider now the effect of schism on the spirituality of our preachers. One half their studies are directed to the combat of error. This freezes the emotions. Love grows faint, and faith is dim. The soul seldom bathes in the rich and deep fountain of emotive theology. It stalks on the icy surface of chilling speculation or of freezing externals. Hence, preachers use God's truth as a meager traffic, instead of pleading it as if it were 'fire in their bones.' They are chilled, too, in part, by the size of their congregations. Instead of fifty or two hundred, give a minister twenty-five hundred listeners, and if he has any soul, you will rouse it 'from center to circumference.'

"Nor does the spirituality of the private members suffer less than that of the ministers. While the latter fill the tide of spiritual life with icebergs of controversy and speculation, the former ride on them spiritually frozen and famishing. Such sermons must be heard. Such literature must be read. It is said, 'Much important instruction is thus found in a small compass.' The Bible once read through will give all that instruction which is worth having. I fear the best apology for the reading of schismatic literature is that we can not find its principles taught in the Bible any way, and must find them, if at all, in controversial works. While reading these books, we proportionably neglect the Bible. And hence the awful amount of Bible ignorance, in which alone can be planted and matured the seeds of schism. We intend to find in a little space the whole will of God on some important point, and behold, we are presently cheated by the sentiments of men for those of

God, and we know so little of the Bible as not to perceive our deception. Such persons are very clamorous in their resolutions to be what their books require.

"Schismatics, often without vital piety, are perfectly satisfied with mere sectarianism. Their very attitude requires them to controvert a great deal. Christians often urge them to give up their unscriptural features. They are compelled either to do so, or to advocate them. In the advocacy they become warm, and are apt to forget the importance of being any thing more than 'good Methodists,' 'good Presbyterians,' 'good Reformers,' etc. Now these words only denote firm adherence to sects. Such feelings may influence even the unconverted. A fear of losing those members of a sect who are seen to be destitute of grace, now, makes the minister slow to tell them he doubts the security of their condition. If they are good sectarians, the preacher is tempted to think it sufficient.

"Some think schism productive of Christian activity. It is argued that one sect operates to provoke another, and thus all are made active. The activity is of a suspicious character. It is prompted by party feeling, and not by an unmingled desire for the glory of God. It can not be blessed of God. Nor are the feelings it generates consistent with real piety. Love often wounded waxes cold and dies. While the hosts of God devour each other, all are faint and dispirited.

"Now, dry up the source of all these evils. Ministers will be found in almost, if not quite, sufficient numbers to supply the demand. Means for their

support will abound so that the poorest regions can have the gospel preached to them. The preachers will not have to divide their labors between the pulpit and the farm, or the schoolroom, or the merchandise, or other avocations in which they now seek their living. Villages would not be rent into four or five antagonizing religious interests. But all their inhabitants would make the same house the sanctuary of their public devotions. They would all pray for the same preacher. The same voice would rally them all to live near the Savior. All would sustain the same Sabbath-school! Our town could then sustain 21 missionaries more than it now does, and give them over \$500, each, per year, and that without an increased expense. Put this thought in another form: We as Christians indulge an evil in our town, which in effect, imprisons from year to year, 21 of God's ministers. Allowing to each one 2,000 heathens to lead in the way of life, we withhold from 42,000 perishing souls the means of life and salvation, so long as we may remain divided as the body of Christ. Let us be united, and our home preachers will have their congregations crowded by hundreds, and they will preach as if it were worth while. The costly and gorgeous machinery with which the attendance of crowds is now sought would give place in the sanctuary to the voice of joy and praise.

"Who then can oppose the union of God's people? It must not be forgotten that sinners will then be drawn to Christ through heaven's appointed influence by thousands and millions. This is the inevitable effect our Savior has ordained in connection

with its own means or cause; the union of all his people. Many of his people have here determined in His name to form such a union, and faith needs no better argument than the penitent hundreds whose sobs you now hear. Were such results ever known to follow a few sermons before? Yes, on the day of Pentecost similar circumstances existed, and similar results followed. God's people were all together in one place. No dissenting voice spread distrust of the gospel among the listening thousands. With one voice the appeal was made. Such have always been the results where the people of God were all one. A few days after this wonderful revival 5,000 were converted under a single sermon. Such results always will attend such circumstances. Christ has promised it. He can not deceive. O, what an argument for our oneness! Our neighbors and kindred will go to hell without it, whatever efforts we make in the absence of it to arrest and convert them. But feeling anticipates the time for exhortation. Could we see all the appalling evils of schism, exhortation would be needless.

"Part of our duty is to carry the gospel to the heathens. Schisms among its believers forbid them receive it. It claims to be the gospel of peace. Revealed in that light, it is expected to calm all the belligerent feelings of its subjects. Dissensions among them belie one of its most prominent and essential features. The whole is rejected as an imposture. Our missionaries often make heathen ground the arena of fierce debate for the settlement of Baptism, or something else, which I awfully fear God will curse any of us for saying he has left in doubt. For

the dissensions among Christians on this and kindred subjects, I declare that I have never seen any better reason, than a desire to contend. They surely would not allow themselves to do so, if they saw the awful consequences. Contend! while sinners in the excitement of the contest plunge into hell? Contend! With whom? With the blood-bought companions of eternal inheritance! Contend? About what? Whether we may safely change baptism from a burial to a sprinkling! God forgive the sin of such a contest! I can sympathize with no expression of difficulty on such a subject.

“Contend? For what? The baptism of unconscious babes! When the Bible clearly requires the baptism of none but believers! Contend! When a mite of Christian charity would bury, in a cloud of oblivion, the insignificant difference! Yes; God’s people carry the gospel of peace to the benighted, and plead with them to receive it; but the blood of strife on the garments of its advocates, bids heathens beware of imposture! Schism not only dries up our resources of ministers and money for the evangelization of earth, but veils in a cloud of suspicion the means we are enabled, in our distracted condition, to employ. Efficiency is, therefore, almost wholly forestalled. We are an army in confusion. Our strength is wasted upon our fellow soldiers. The unbroken phalanx of deriding foes are amused and entertained by our confusion. They laugh to scorn our purpose to subdue them to the Prince of our Salvation. Dispirited, like the hosts of Israel in the assault of Ai, we are driven before our enemies. Our very attitude declares we disregard the word of

our commander. Must I tell it for shame to him who said it? Methought I heard one say, 'We can not understand the instructions of our captain. He has told us of one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, but he has given his will so indefinitely, that we can not for our lives understand what he means. He says the way of duty is so plain that the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein; but we have found him vastly mistaken. We have closed our ears to all others but himself; have taken the Bible alone, and read and prayed again and again, to learn what he requires us to do that we might act in harmony; but to learn it is impossible. He seems to have intended for some good, incomprehensible by us, that we should not be agreed and united in carrying out His will.' Let the light of reason cover the sentiment with shame and blushes! It is a slander on my Savior, and it was forged by the father of lies. Let the mantle of infernal darkness shroud it forever! We are confused only because 'we heap to ourselves leaders after the flesh.' The voice of Christ, heard by all, would still this tempest; would calm and harmonize these wrangling purposes and conflicting labors. O, heed that voice, and let the warfare cease! Heed! and capture thousands to Christ.

"6. *Schism is a source of corruption.* To receive an unworthy church member injures the piety and purity of the body. He is like a leper in the camp—like leaven in meal; he imparts his character by contagion. Vicious example is an irresistible means of moral assimilation. 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' It deserves repetition, that a

pure church is the world's only hope of conversion. An impure member soon assimilates many. The whole church becomes less pure. Schism tends to the introduction and retention, in the churches, of improper materials. Each sect becomes a rival in the suit for members. Names and numbers are deemed essential. The church ceases to be regarded a home for the pure in sentiment and in heart. Wealth and numbers make it swerve from its high position. Truth is withheld because repulsive to some character it courts. Error is dignified by the complacent embrace of *charity*(?). The influential and the great, whose names are deemed 'towers of strength,' are often encouraged to enter the church without 'the one thing needful,' through the influence of those who would 'glory in the flesh.' The sentiment is, "if we repel this man till he may become a Christian, he may join some other sect. There are so many whose doors are open to all, we can't be sustained if we do not adopt the attractive machinery and principles which, in their influence, swell the lists of other sects.' The rivalry of schism at first introduced infants. The monster, Romanism, in its incipency was divided into the Unitarian and the Trinitarian parties. Before this the Catechumens, who were persons in legal infancy, but had been taught the duties and obligations of religion, had to make their own profession of faith. For a long time they could not join till twelve years of age. After the rise of these two parties, first the one and then the other diminished the years necessary to secure membership, until age ceased to be regarded a qualification for membership altogether.

For this plausible explanation how infants came to be regarded church members, while the Bible is silent about it, I am indebted to Brother Smedley, who showed it to me in Robinson's History of Baptism. It is the only explanation I have ever met, and I can not help confiding in its truth. It shows what I am urging—the evils of schisms in receiving and retaining unconverted members. Rivalry is essentially involved in the existence of schisms, and rivalry can not resist the tendencies here noted. Hence the church smothers her light with an incubus of unspiritual members. Were there only one church there could be no rivalry. As schism has given birth to infant membership, we can trace in that one thing a legion of its evils. I have, in the last few days, been astounded by the results of a little investigation into these things. Where infant baptism has become general, believers' baptism is lost, and the sects and preachers are ignorant of conversion, and the church is indistinguishable from the world. The ministers, as well as the churches, are corrupted by schism. Extreme views are the basis of all antagonisms in religion. One extreme begets another. It is almost impossible for ministers ever to find and display the golden mean. Since one error begets another, schism necessarily becomes the mother of schisms, and hence it is impossible to predict the number yet to be born, unless the source is dried up. Let us, then, lay our hearts and heads to work to this end.

“III. *The Causes of Schisms.* When a physician knows the nature and the causes of a disease he is better prepared to treat it. To remove the cause

will not always remove the effect without other help, but in this case I believe it will. Among these causes I will note,

"1. *A want of acquaintance with the Bible.* Thousands study the Bible by proxy. They think it not meant for private interpretation. They have their view on the expression, 'No Scripture of private interpretation.' I have seen a translation which reads, 'of private impulse.' At all events, while the Scriptures require us to make God's Word the 'man of our counsel,' thousands, it is to be feared, feel no obligation to found their belief in it alone. They are willing to indorse such denominational features as their spiritual guides tell them the Bible requires. A lady of this community sometime since objected to our terms of Christian union, because she learned they would reject infant baptism. When informed that we intended to organize on principles strictly scriptural, she remarked, 'Well, I know that is scriptural.' 'If so,' replied I, 'we don't intend to reject it; will you be so good as to show us the Scripture for it.' 'Why, said she, in great surprise, 'you don't mean to insinuate that it is not scriptural, do you?' 'If it is,' said I, 'I have never seen any evidence in the Bible to that effect. If you will show it to me I shall be heartily glad to see and adopt it.' 'O,' said she, 'I can't argue it with you, but our preacher can. He preached on it sometime ago, and proved it.' Now this is the way with hundreds. They believe and practice, in religion, not because they know what the Bible requires, but because their teachers in religion tell them the Bible requires thus and so. No man ever

found, anywhere within the lids of the Bible, the slightest mention of infant baptism, and yet, while any ordinary mind could, by reading each chapter of the Bible know it is not there, thousands, with an assurance, as of truth itself, affirm that it is a Bible doctrine. O Christian, in the name of God and of truth, let me beg you to say it no more, until you can prove it yourself. While this liability to imposition is found in the general and criminal want of Bible knowledge among Christians, it is more natural than wonderful that they will array themselves into sects, under human leaders. Let all be thoroughly educated in the Bible, and in vain are all the efforts of men to marshal them under banners inscribed with human mottoes and human principles. The Bible known is their only religion. If the Bible alone teach us, we shall have unity of sentiment. The Bible can not teach one thing to me and the opposite to my neighbor. To affirm it, were a foul and blasphemous slander of its Author. Let him be true and clear, though every man a double-tongued liar. He can not deceive.

"2. *A blind reverence for tradition* is another hotbed of schism. Many are dedicated to their schisms in infancy. As Hannibal was, at eight years of age, by his father, Hamilchar, brought to the altar and made to swear eternal hate to Rome, so are hundreds of infants brought in a most solemn manner, by their parents, to the altar of their schisms, and dedicated to them in that tender age. Frequently reminded of their parents' vows, as they grow up, they gradually indorse those vows. Their consciences were kidnapped, and hereditary religion being substituted,

they dare not think for themselves. The spell of education is irresistible. Ask why they can not renounce their sectarian tenets. They tell you that principles, believed and adopted by so many good and great men, can not be wrong, nor unscriptural. Ask them for their Scripture proof of such tenets, and although they can tell you when they heard their preacher prove them by the Bible, and acknowledge that their consciences could not be easy without adopting them as practical views, they will confess that they know not where one Bible text is to justify their practice. While such a blind devotion to the teachings of men holds spell-bound so many of God's people, and while men are so proud of influence as to try their power in any thing in which they can lead, is it wonderful that we do not harmonize in the interpretation of our Savior's will? Not at all. Jesus explained it to the Pharisees when he said, 'Now do ye reject the commandment of God by your tradition.' Again said he, 'How can ye believe on me, who receive honor one from another?' It is hard for us to reject a notion of our fathers. But we must renounce everything for Christ, and for the union he prayed for. Even parents, and houses, and lands must be despised in comparison with him.

"3. Another cause of the existence and propagation of schism is, that we are too *insensible of our individual responsibility to God in the matter*. We are too apt, when forced to look the awful evils of schisms into the face, to forestall a conviction of duty by the conclusion that the evils are of a congregational character, and are beyond the reach of individual effort to correct them; and yet they can be corrected

only by individual effort. A congregation is composed of individuals, and the only way to remove the evils of a congregation is to remove them from the individuals. Should just one individual to-day become interested to see these alarming evils removed, and determine to devote his life to efforts for that purpose, he could do nothing toward it but as an individual, to abjure all schismatic principles and practices in religion, and as an individual, to place himself on the scriptural basis, and stand there immovable as a rock embedded in the billows of the ocean. Then, if you have influence at all, it will be felt in that way. But you might as well hope to move the ocean without interrupting its drops as to remove schisms from among Christians without influencing the actions of each individual Christian. Do you belong to a religious schism? to a church holding even one principle, as a term of organization, which you can not, as an individual, prove scriptural to the entire satisfaction of all who love God? If so, while your present connection continues, you are, by the full weight of your influence, an advocate for all the soul-destroying evils of schism. Should you pause to ask what your brethren in schism will do, you will thus lose sight of your individual duty, and, in effect, sanction the refusal of the whole crowd to do their duty. The right way to remove evils in religion is to labor for that end as if we thought nobody responsible but our individual selves. This is true of all religious evils, but remarkably so of schism. To illustrate the point, we know there is but one right, while there may be ten thousand wrongs. Only one

church is right, while all that differ from it are wrong. We hold this convention to examine carefully the claims of all the churches here represented, to see if any of them is right in all its features. Should we find one to be right, every individual will be in duty bound to join that church. Suppose it is the Episcopalian, then Bro. Smedley will, as an individual, have to leave the Baptists and join that church. If he waits to see what his brethren in Virginia will do, he thus declares their claims upon him superior to God's, and places the discharge of his duty on this principle—'I will give up my sin and do my duty if all who have joined me in my sin will now join me in the duty. But if not, I will stand by them and sustain them in their sin.' This is the principle on which many sinners delay repentance. They forget that as individual sinners they are to meet in judgment an individual God.

'Encompassed by a throng,
On numbers they depend;
They say so many can't be wrong,
And miss a happy end.'

"Not only Bro. Smedley, but all others not belonging to the Episcopal church, would be bound to join it, or stand willfully responsible for all the crushing consequences which we have seen flow from schism. If the Baptist church be the one, then we are all, by the same power of motive, and under the same awful penalty, in duty bound to join that. If you wait to consult your parents, preachers or brethren, you, in effect, ask men whether or not you may safely obey God. Yes, my brethren, we must forget that others, as well as ourselves, are responsible to

God, in our own deep sense of duty, and haste to comply with his requirements. Wait for nothing but a sense of personal duty to God. 'We ought to obey God rather than man.' If you all feel your individuality as you should, we shall see an expression of your resolves to-day. The effect of obedience on your standing and relationships will be immediately discarded. Though martyrdom be the consequence, duty will be the aim.

"4. *A want of love to dying sinners* may be one cause of disunion among professed Christians. I say among '*professed Christians*,' for 'all are not Israel who are of Israel.' Many who loudly profess religion in heart, really in works, deny the Lord. The Scripture basis and duty of union being displayed, will infallibly attract such as fear God, and love and pity sinners. They will not confer with flesh and blood. From this point can be drawn a weighty motive to union. Without God's appointed instrumentality for converting the world, you see sinners perishing by scores and hundreds. We are, as a people, but little better off than the heathens; unless an improved knowledge of duty is better for the lost than ignorance.

"Hast thou a wicked child? Learn hence that all thy labors to win him may be in vain without the union of Christians. The Bible sets forth the idea that it generally is so. Shouldst thou not then labor to find the means of uniting all Christians? As you love the offspring of your own body, you should seek, by all lawful means, this end. While disunited you can not enjoy a deep and thorough revival in your respective communities.

"There has been an increasing spirit of prayer for union in this vicinity for several weeks. Most of the Christians here seem resolved to unite, though it may cost a sacrifice of every sentiment that it will not wound the conscience to yield. This spirit, so in accordance with the genius of the Bible, seems to meet the pleasure of God. His people seem to feel each other's woes. Sympathy and love are the heaven-wrought chains which bind their hearts together, as a rich chaplet for the brow of Jesus. Their souls are banqueting on the daily manna of the Savior's love. Unnumbered sinners are seeking the Lord. More than three scores are already rejoicing in the pearl of great price. It seems that the great deep of Infidelity is broken up. Those who have hitherto seemed sealed over to hardness, are now submissive and earnest inquirers after the way of life. And mark with what bold hearts God's people are seen to attack wickedness in high places. Many, whose piety has been smothered to death, as it were, beneath a thick vail of prejudice and bigotry, are now radiant with a halo of unsullied graces. A practical commentary on our Savior's declaration, 'Ye are the light of the world,' is now published among us in the impressive type of Christian character and Christian conduct.

"In the dawn of this light, philosophy and natural religion have vanished, like stars before the arisen sun. The icebergs of sin in rebel breasts are dissolving in the kindling blaze of earnest Christianity. Can he who loves dying sinners willingly cast a damper into this holy fire? Surely never! He would rather, far rather, add to the power by which

sin-fettered souls are drawn to Christ—would gladly raise the flame of love, and zeal, and faith, and hope, till all beneath the dark canopy of depravity should be consumed, and peace, and joy, and love, the happy attendants of purity, from the unblighted plains of Elysian felicity should visit our redeemed world, and scatter the seed of ambrosial fruits. Yes; Sectarianism, the main clog with which Satan hinders the usefulness and happiness of Christians, would be dead, and its requiem would be chanted by the infant voices of unnumbered babes in Christ.

“Sectarian bigotry, it is confessed, is the most efficient tool of Satan for the destruction of souls. But what is it? The world may not have seriously thought of its real nature. It is generally understood to mean that its subject unwaveringly contends for the rectitude of his own party and principles, while he as steadfastly rejects all that oppose his as wrong. There was scarcely ever a greater mistake. Sectarian bigotry is the disposition to reject principles acknowledged right, because opposed to the principles which we hold, and intend to hold, for reasons involved in neither the principles themselves nor in their legitimate tendencies. Every advocate of infant baptism, who has examined and found no evidence of it in the Bible, but is determined to hold and teach it, as a Bible doctrine, for some reason he is ashamed to avow, as, for instance, to get members into his sect before their sense of propriety shall forbid it, or to compliment the wisdom of those who gave his own infancy its benefits—every such person is a sectarian bigot. I have heard the Baptists styled sectarian bigots, because they profess to

think themselves the only church of God on earth, and give that as the reason why they can fraternize with no other. This is the very reason why I should consider them perfectly free from bigotry. If they swerve in practice, and give evidence of fellowship for opposing principles, they virtually acknowledge themselves deceptive in avowing their own. One can not believe a proposition both true and false at the same time.

"I once heard a good man, in an enthusiastic declaration of his religious liberality, declare that he could pray for the prosperity of one denomination as well as of another—that he could take unaffected pleasure in seeing people connect themselves with the most corrupt religious sects on earth, and would far rather have *any religion at all* than none. Though I, and numbers of others who heard it, considered it a declaration that he had no principles at all, yet I knew him to be a good man, and approached him with the affectionate suggestion, that he could join our union without sacrifice of principle; and was astounded by his solemn protestation that he could not do it, though the world's conversion hinged on that act. Denying that infant baptism saved its subject, or in any material degree affected its spiritual condition, he still said he would not renounce it for the union of all God's people, and for all the glorious consequences our Savior has connected with it. With no sense of obligation to hold it as a conscientious principle, he is immovably resolved to hold it as a practical sentiment, though the community where he holds his responsibilities should sink to hell through his obstinate devotion

to that sentiment. Though he is here to-day, and may hold me as an enemy for telling the truth, yet a principle of duty to God and to man requires me to pronounce it sectarian bigotry in its last and most improved edition. He surely believes that his holding an erroneous view will make it better than God's truth. Never was a Pharisee more bigoted. Nor can I believe he fully knows his own heart when he thinks he can pray for other sects than his own. I frankly confess that though there is not a meetinghouse in this town which I did not take the lead in helping to build, I now, from a sense of duty, pray for the downfall of every sect in our community. I can't pray for Christian union without doing so. For the members of these sects I have no unkind feelings; but for the sects themselves I have a hatred as deep and strong as my love to God, to souls, and to the Bible. This feeling may be ignorantly branded as bigotry, but it is far from it. If our chairman profess to believe the Baptists right, while he obstinately holds principles opposed to them, he is a bigot. He must think his indorsement of an error will make it preferable to the truth. He admits that they have the truth, and that he is opposed to them, and yet he declares his position better than theirs. This is bigotry in all its fullness. Whoever, then, admits his view untenable, and yet strives to maintain it, and deems it uncharitable in others not to indorse it, while they conscientiously hold the opposite as true, is a most arrant bigot. If the Baptists claim to be the only church, as they are represented as doing, and at the same time admit the correctness of opposite principles, they are bigots for

not yielding their principles for those they acknowledge true.

"I have been specific on this point, because I have very often heard the charge of bigotry preferred by the most consummate bigots against those entirely free from it. To be consistent is never to be bigoted.

"IV. The union of God's people is DESIRABLE FOR ITS OWN SAKE. Its absence is the aching void in the great heart of Christendom—'tis the lost treasure from the temple of our God—the jewel from the crown of the Lamb's wife. Its restoration would cause general joy to all who love the Savior. To encourage prayerful effort to this end, allow, in conclusion of this tedious speech, a few arguments:

"1. *That Christians all have the same spirit*, warrants the belief that Christian union is practicable. Had we spirits naturally at war with each other, the hope of union would indeed be chimerical. But since 'by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,' there is in our feelings a heaven-born disposition 'to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' All God's children have the same lineage, are not divided into plebians and nobles. The blood of our royal Father runs through all our veins. The branches of the same tree might as reasonably be expected to yield diverse fruits, as for us, unless constrained by criminal means, to antagonize with each other. Deriving life from the same Spirit, it is unnatural and soul-distressing to war. Variances among Christians always die when both parties are revived. This truth always struck me as proving the divinity of Christianity. A religion

that draws its possessors together and inspires sympathy and love can not be of man. Heartfelt religion is essentially attractive. Its existence even in two strangers can not be manifest to each other without attaching their souls. Christian experience, when told to kindred spirits, becomes the necessary basis of fellowship. It is perhaps for this reason that Christians are exhorted to be always ready to give evidence of the hope within them. Nothing in regenerate men forbids Christian union, but everything tends to it. Nothing seems necessary but an opportunity. There are perhaps four thousand Christians here to-day, bound by the schismatic fetters of different sects. Could you individually divest yourselves of those restraints, and stand here, as you shall soon stand in the great judgment, sensible of accountability only to God, your souls would devoutly inquire for the Bible basis of union. Were those fetters sundered, you would flow together as kindred drops. We can't but love the soul stamped with the image of Jesus. All Christians can join in the strain :

'Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints,
How sweet to my soul is communion with saints!
To find at the banquet of mercy there's room,
And dwell in the presence of Jesus at home.'

"2. *That we have the same spiritual wants*, increases the hope of our becoming united whenever the right basis is displayed. The fullness of one does not impoverish another. The richer his own draughts, the more devoutly he desires the other to be blessed. The fountain is inexhaustible, and the more that

drink, the richer will be the outpouring. Each enjoys the draught of all the others, almost as much as his own. When an estate is to be divided, we like not too many heirs; but here fullness is given to all, and inexhaustible fullness left undivided. Not only can we enjoy each other's pleasures, but we can delight in the success of each other's useful labors. An army may triumph in the capture of every redoubt that is taken. Though few do the work, the joy is general. So with us. Every advance of our common cause, the world's conversion, must give joy, so soon as it is known, to the whole Israel of God. That joy is now marred by the apprehension that the converts may have joined schisms. Such suspicion must ever draw a sigh from even the purest heart.

"The Bible is to be translated, and scattered into all lands and tongues of the earth. Whatever cheering news comes from distant lands now, is heard with the distressing fear that some adverse schism may have stamped its impress on the work performed. The joy is thus curtailed. We are all bound for the accomplishment of these great works. Such a community of responsibility and interest can not fail to enlist community of feeling. One Christian can not take unaffected pleasure in praying and laboring to build up an interest whose promotion involves the displacency of all others. As God's children we love to please each other, if conscience and truth will allow. There is, therefore, nothing in our real needs as Christians to keep us divided, but everything to bring us together. Our wants are not supplied by the stinting of others, so as to create jealousy lest our supplies should be diminished by too large a

participation. Universal experience approves the poet's sentiment:

'The more that come with free good will,
Make the banquet sweeter still.'

"3. *Our labors* tend to drive us together. While ancient Israel was building up the walls of Jerusalem, each 'over against his own door,' all were ready to respond to the trumpet's sound, by rushing to the defense of their brethren against a common foe. Had they been divided by factions deploring each other's existence, would they not most surely have rejoiced in the triumphs of the common foe over those interests they desired to see prostrated? Our hearts would be faint, were we, while endeavoring to beat back an invading foe of our country, to fall into divisions, and be compelled to exhaust part of our strength in the effort to quell home insurrections and harmonize furious factions. To rescue a common country should be the purpose which would resolve us into one. We could not acknowledge to the powers by which we were commissioned to drive back the foe, that we had wasted our rations in the willful destruction of each other; and yet such would be our account, if faithfully rendered. And such will it be to our final Judge, if disunion continue to distract and paralyze our usefulness.

"4. *That we have the same home in view* should constrain us to be one. We have set out in the journey to the skies. We must feel inclined to travel together, and halt together. If there be safety in union, we will not be devoured by beasts of prey, nor by the ruffians who infest our way through the wilderness. If any

are sick, or in need, we feel that they are members of our family. We aid and comfort them. Were a number of us agreed to emigrate to a far country, we should soon feel a warm attachment toward all the company. We should aid one another to prepare for the journey. But we have in view the far-off clime of cloudless sunshine and glory. 'There the wicked cease from troubling,' and the wayworn pilgrims rest. Toils are over, and tears are forever dried. Parted friends shall meet and part no more. Love shall bind anew its sundered ties.

'Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.'

It is our Father's House, and we are brethren. We can't bear divisions in our midst. Love flames in our hearts. We are drawn together by ties we love to cherish.

"And finally, *we shall be one in Heaven*. No dissensions can exist there. No factions in the great congregation of the firstborn will withhold the heart's deep 'Amen,' when God is worshiped. No barriers will part the millions that banquet on a Savior's love, as now our schisms keep us from coming to the Lord's earthly board. He has but one Church, but one organization, which is authorized to spread a table and call it the Lord's. It is a fearful thing for a human society to spread its table in His name; and just as fearful for men to approach and recognize it as His. If we shall be one in Heaven, we should not erect barriers between us here. I have heard Baptists charged with doing this. It may be so. But it can not be in their refusal to go to the

tables of schisms, and to admit schismatics to that which they spread in the Church of the Lord. If they be the Church of God, the utmost extent of their religious liberality will permit them only to guard the ordinance as they received it. They dare not buy popularity by its perversion from its original design. However much they may love parents and friends, they dare not invite them till God pronounces them worthy to approach the feast. The plea for intercommunion with the sects, commonly urged, *that it is illiberal and bigoted to refuse*, censures the Author of Zion's laws. He has made them to exclude the disobedient, and if instead of keeping them as given, his people take his table into the highway, and invite their friends to grace it, while they reject his laws; the logic of such an act would be that God was too illiberal in the establishment of his ordinances, and that his people have the right to correct his error. If we are to be one in Heaven, let us try to be one on earth. Let us endeavor to tear down every barrier to unity. O, let us feel the Spirit of our Savior's prayer, 'that we all may be one,' that the world may believe the Gospel and be saved.

"And now, my indulgent audience! I thank you for your profound and respectful attention, won, I trust, more by the theme than by your speaker, but let me beg your response to one question. If you respond affirmatively, I feel that my task for this morning is done. If negatively, I fear it is not. Do you feel convinced that the divisions of Christians into conflicting denominations, are, according to the Bible, wrong, and seriously in the way of the world's conversion? If so, you will oblige me by rising and

standing, while we may all survey the vast crowd to learn your conclusion. I ask this expression from Christians and sinners alike."

The whole landscape seemed to rise.—After contemplating the extent of the demonstration for a minute, the Judge turned around with big tears of gratitude in his eyes, and his hand was warmly seized and heartily shaken, in turn, by Messrs. Sellers, Hall, Smedley, Seeley, and others, who had found seats in the stand. He had spoken with great warmth; but his voice, having been well developed in labored efforts at the bar and in Congress when in the prime of life, remained strong and clear to the last. His tears not unfrequently moistened the soil for the reception of truth; and perhaps not an eye among the thousands that listened remained dry during the whole discourse. The stoutest infidels, who had made a mock of sin before, were now seen to bow the head and drop the tear. Scarcely a person changed his seat during the three hours of the exercises. The Judge being seated, the Chairman arose and said:

"The crowd will feel free to stand or sit while we sing the following song. Its spirit was perhaps never so fully and generally felt as it is here to-day. It is familiar to many and we trust dear to all:

"Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints,
How sweet to my soul is communion with saints;
To find at the banquet of mercy there's room,
And feel in the presence of Jesus at home.

CHORUS.—Home, home, sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home,
Sorrow-soothing, sweet home.

Sweet bonds that unite all the children of peace,
And thrice-precious Jesus, whose love can not cease;
Though oft from thy presence in sadness I roam,
I long to behold thee in glory, at home

I sigh from this body of sin to be free,
Which hinders my joy and communion with thee;
Though now my temptations like billows may foam,
All, all will be peace, when I'm with thee at home.

While here in the valley of conflict I stay,
O give me submission and strength as my day;
In all my afflictions, to thee would I come,
Rejoicing in hope of my glorious home.

Whate'er thou deniest, O, give me thy grace,
The Spirit's sure witness, and smiles of thy face;
Inspire me with patience to wait at thy throne,
And find even now a sweet foretaste of home.

I long, dearest Lord, in thy beauties to shine,
No more as an exile in sorrow to pine,
And in thy dear image arise from the tomb,
With glorified millions to praise thee, at home."

While the full notes of this song were warbled in heavenly melody by the vast crowd, the Christians, as impelled by a holy instinct, were seen to grasp each other by the hand. Sinners wept as feeling the wrath of God. When the song closed, the chairman announced "that the meeting was free for all God's people—that any were at liberty to advocate or oppose the measures it was intended to bring forward—that it would advance the interests of truth to have free and full discussion of the principles of Christian union—that motions, in regard to progress, were then in order—that Mr. Smedley's address was next on the programme of exercises, but that it

might be better to adjourn the meeting until to-morrow. He preferred suggestions."

Mr. Smedley. "The exercises this morning have, no doubt, realized the great expectations of the crowd, and they will scarcely desire the services prolonged, without intermission. For my own part, I should like to meditate on what we have to-day heard. Another speech might dissipate some of the impressions made, and I move that we adjourn until to-morrow at 10 o'clock, A. M." This motion was carried unanimously; and after prayer by Mr. Smedley, the Committee to take care of Company reported preparations ample for the whole crowd. Night meetings were appointed for the Presbyterian and Reform houses. Mr. Sawyer arose and said, "The Methodist house will be opened if needed. Two houses were not sufficient last night." "Thank you, Bro. Sawyer, replied the Chairman; "there will then be preaching there also." The crowd was then dismissed.

At night, Mr. Sellers preached at the Presbyterian house, Mr. Hall at the Reform, and Mr. Smedley at the Methodist. Each house was crowded, and many had to stand outside. The meetings were all too deeply interesting to be described; but the one at the Reform church must receive special notice. Mr. Hall had enjoyed the unrestrained confidence of his brethren. They deemed him incapable of deception. Many of them had, from the news of his conviction and conversion, become alarmed about the security of their own condition, and had begun to seek the Lord. This he did not know, and fearing they were all, as their preacher had been, unconverted, he met them with a spirit of trembling.

He doubted not that their undivided frowns would be upon him. He supposed them as ignorant of real religion as he had always been until the last few days. O, with what a sense of weakness did he now reënter the pulpit, which he felt that he had so long occupied as a zealous advocate of soul-deluding error! His text was, "I did it ignorantly and in unbelief." He first related, with tears of joy, his own conversion; nor were tears wanting to testify the sympathy felt by many of his brethren. He then proceeded to show that the current Reformation altogether discards both repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ—that its subjects are ignorant of regeneration, and are consequently in no wise bettered by their religion—that all who had joined according to his former sentiments and teachings might indeed be as sincere as he had been, but they were sincerely and fatally deceived—that the soul, the richness, the marrow of Christianity are wholly wanting in their system—that he had been deceived by its appearance of plausibility—that it looked so much like the Scriptures—but was only a carcass without life, a body with no soul—that it was sweet and lovely in the sinner's eyes, gave him peace and hope without repentance, but was only the form of godliness without the power.

He attempted to show what repentance is, and how different from what he had thought. As he described the soul routed from all its works and hopes for self-salvation, and said, "My friends I thought I was gone forever!" I think there was scarcely a tearless eye in the house. And then, as he thanked God for his own timely awakening—but

language is too poor to describe the effect. God's Spirit was there, and he works not like man. And then his earnest and soul-subduing appeals to the loved ones he thought he had ruined by false doctrine, were irresistible. He feared they were even worse than if they made no pretensions to religion; because they were not likely to suspect the danger of being deceived, not knowing by bitter repentance, or self-loathing and self-acquaintance, the deceitfulness of their own hearts. He preached a faithful sermon. He descended from the pulpit and begged that if any of his brethren could fellowship the experience he had related, they would come and give him their hand. Five old men came and said they had felt as he described before they ever consented to be baptized, and never would have joined a church, which discarded a doctrine so precious to them, if they could have found one holding that doctrine, and not rejecting Christ's ordinance of baptism; that they had been uneasy all the time, from the belief that the doctrine of their church ruined all who embraced it. He then begged any who could not fellowship, from the heart, his evidences of conversion to give him their hand, if they could forgive him for having ignorantly deceived them as to the one thing needful. With streaming eyes, they came by scores and asked him to pray for them. He was overcome. He could not stand on his feet. He fell to his knees, but was too full for utterance. He had felt that he could never be happy under the thought of having ruined so many souls. Now he felt that God was about to bless his effort to undo that fearful work. Many at all the

churches became happily wise unto salvation that night, and there were few, if any who did not weep. God was with his people. At each house, it was announced that a young converts' prayer meeting would be held at sunrise the next morning, in the Presbyterian church. The people could not stay away, and the house would scarcely hold half that went.

Does the reader suppose there was no opposition to this work?—that the devil was asleep? For at least a month before the convention met, the most indefatigable efforts had been made to blast the private character of Judge Rolen. It had been alleged that he accumulated his wealth by grinding the poor and the necessitous—that he had confidentially revealed it to a friend as his intention to get up a party in religion that he might be its head—that he had abused the close-communication baptists as bitterly as any one else, and had only invited them to aid in the formation of his party that he might get large numbers of them to join it—that he had acknowledged these intentions before he professed religion, and various expressions of an uncharitable, injudicious, and even of a lying nature, were forged and ascribed to him, and circulated to his prejudice. Engrossed by his all-absorbing purpose to see God's people united, he paid no attention to them. People traced many of them to their wicked origin, and came to the conclusion that his character must be as fair as an angel's not to have been blasted. This hatred for the truth's sake only made for him the more friends, and the more decidedly devoted ones. The sequel will develop the character of his ambition. It is best not to condemn until guilt is proved.

CHAPTER XI.—*The Basis Unchanged and Unchangeable.*

PROFITIOUS nature seemed to smile on the object of the Convention. The village of L—— seemed destined as the garden spot of the Lord's vineyard; and the season, the springtime of a rich soul-harvest. The complacent sun poured his gladdening beams through the balmy air of this smiling morning. The population of L——, on the previous night, was believed to be equaled, if not surpassed, by the number of visitors. Dispersing thousands had on the day before spread more widely the news from the Convention. Each excited and enthusiastic auditor of Judge Rolen's address felt and reported that God's people must be united before the Convention closed. The nature, importance and possibility of such union had been clearly displayed to all. The vast majorities of all the sects there represented, had resolved on such union, though at the sacrifice of everything but conscientious principle. By ten o'clock the same seats which had sufficed the day before, were found vastly insufficient for the crowd; but the deficiency was soon supplied. While the crowd was gathering, the time was improved by voluntary prayers and songs. Almost every five or ten minutes, the deep and profound attention was attracted by the glad news of peace from some soul just emerged from agonized sorrow into the light and liberty of God's children. Zion's mourners did not now need to collect, by labored efforts, the evidences from God's people that the Lord is gracious and worthy to be

trusted. The evidences, like light converged, were harmoniously poured on their minds, and with a few exceptions, the power of conviction was awful; but the light and joy of conversion were sudden and clear. The sorrow endured but for a season. O, it was an occasion whose deep interest an angel's pen could scarcely chronicle.

At the appointed hour, the chairman arose and said: "Mr. Smedley, a Baptist minister from Virginia, will now address the audience." The clustered thousands were still and solemn as the grave. The presence of the awful Majesty was felt. The bending form of the earnest man arose. "My text," said he, "is found in Matt. xvi: 18—'And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' As we have met to organize a church, no apology is needed for preaching on the basis or history of the church. The text implies that Christ's church had not existed before, and was not yet instituted. In prophetic style, the past tense is more often employed to set forth future events than the future tense itself; but to record past events, I am not mindful that the future form of the verb is ever used in the Bible. The establishment of the church was subsequent to the time when our Savior made this declaration. If infant membership had to be inferred from the identity of the Jewish Theocracy and the church of Christ, this remark would need proof. But such identity is nowhere in the Bible intimated. That it does not exist is sufficiently manifest to all who have no object to gain by asserting it, from the fact that even Jews

themselves, the undoubted members of that Theocracy, could not enter Christ's kingdom without regeneration, nor his church without a voluntary profession of their faith in baptism. From all the light shed by the New Testament on the inquiry 'What is the church?' I think it is a body of people called out from the world by Christ, and organized within his kingdom, for the voluntary obedience and display of his laws. The church is within the kingdom, just as every court is within the commonwealth that defines its powers. The kingdom is spiritual and is within its subjects. According to prophesy and fact, it was never established until the descent of the Holy Spirit, as the common resident of all converted hearts. This took place on the day of Pentecost, in proof that Christ's work was complete and accepted of the Father. Then was established in the hearts of regenerate subjects, 'the everlasting kingdom'—the commonwealth of God's spiritual Israel. Its laws were, of course, enacted before its establishment. 'Righteousness and judgment are the basis of the throne.' To receive with the heart his laws is to enter his kingdom. Peculiar badges are destined for the honorable distinction of his willing subjects. They are baptism, the supper, and the ministry. Baptism is the vow of allegiance. Its worthy reception qualifies its recipient to act officially, as a full member of Christ's court, the church, whenever it meets. All churches must be similar, because they are in the same kingdom, and governed by the same laws. If two are at war in their principles, it is plain that one of them is anti-christ.

"Christ is the foundation of the church. To recognize and confess him with the whole heart is here called the rock, because to do so is to take a stand immovably secure against apostacy, and all such, and only such are qualified for membership in his church. Each one who does so confess him is entitled to the honorable cognomen Peter, which means a fragment of rock. The church is based on the *bona fide* confession of Christ's Messiahship. Without this, to invest a person with its peculiar badges, were to alter its laws. All believers are spiritual stones, and are suited to some position in this spiritual temple. As for Solomon's temple, every stone was hewn and fitted to its place at the quarry, so that the sound of a hammer was not heard on the rising walls, so must every stone of God's spiritual house be fitted before it is brought to its place. The unbelieving and the unconverted have no place in the walls of this spiritual house. 'All must know the Lord, from the least even unto the greatest.' There is no place for one to teach another, 'Know ye the Lord.' There is then no room for infants. Rival courts may need them to aid the power of their antagonism against Christ's church. But in his court there are no functions that they can discharge. They would only encumber the efficiency of the church.

"I. *Christ's Church an object of hatred.* 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Walled cities in olden times are said to have had secret rooms over their gates, in which their war councils were held. The expression, 'the gates of hell,' perhaps means that the sagacity and malevolence of hell

shall be brought to bear against Christ's church—that evil spirits in infinite number and almost unlimited sagacity, and unyielding hostility, might be expected to employ all their machinations to seduce and corrupt its members, and destroy the simplicity and purity of its ordinances. A pure church is destined to be assailed; its destruction will be plotted. 'All who live godly must suffer persecution.' I will note some of the ways in which Satan has plotted the destruction of Christ's church, that you may 'not think strange of the fiery trials which will come upon you,' if you form here a church strictly on New Testament principles.

"The councils of hell first passed a decree to reduce the church by persecution. Earth was drunk with the blood of martyred saints during the reigns of the several Emperors of Rome immediately succeeding the advent of Christ, until the rise of Constantine. Under Pagan Rome, it is estimated that 3,000,000 of Christians were cruelly slaughtered for 'the testimony of Jesus.' Tacitus states that Nero persecuted them with such unrelenting severity as to awaken the compassion even of their enemies. During the persecutions, the strange truth became apparent that 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.' Piety, like gold tried in the furnace, displayed itself undimmed by dross. Its divine splendor won the beholder, and it became glorious to die martyred. Persecution to destroy the church, was like the attempt to smother fire with fuel. The intended obstructions to the flame became its own material.

"The Prince of Darkness revoked his first decree,

and issued another, to corrupt by an unholy alliance with the secular power, our holy religion. Her name and livery were now stolen to grace the empire of darkness. Lucre was substituted for the soul of religion. Those who united the power with the form of godliness, found no charms in the gorgeous pomp and palaces of a canonized Christianity. Indeed her native simplicity was a rude and unwelcomed guest. Like an insulted goddess, she led her attendants into the wilderness, God's people there retained and observed the principles of religion in their original purity. The conflict was now between nominal and real Christianity. The nominal was backed by the powerful arm of the State. The real was clothed in sackcloth. Human policy was the standard of the former, a heavenly mission the duty of the latter. Human innovations, it mattered not how innocent or influential in their character, she felt compelled, by fealty to her Author, to reject, at whatever hazard. In this rejection she waked a more fearful lion of persecution than Paganism had been. Under Papal Rome, it is believed, that 50,000,000 of Christians were martyred. Rome and her corrupt daughters have dyed their garments in the blood of saints. But still the church exists—God's torch to a benighted world still burns. But Satan is not easily foiled. If he can not amalgamate the church with a power as corrupt as Romanism, he can, at least, organize new sects, in any numbers, more or less reformed, and by the skillful admixture of truth and error, purity and corruption, virtue and vice, revelation and tradition, severely tempt God's church to recognize his church-making authority.

How specious his inducements to decoy the church into a recognition of his usurped power! To reject, we must reject some of the most pious people earth can boast, and that on account of only a few of the devil's principles, so cunningly disguised that through a vail of prejudices wrought by the skill and affection of parental piety, they can scarcely be detected. Yes, the church in such rejection can not avoid the appearance of rejecting the good along with the bad, the divine along with the human. The opposing sects labor anxiously to have it so understood. They profess to believe it so. When they can not be recognized as churches of Christ by those who belong to his church, they brand them as bigots.

"Again, the device is changed. Grant that Christ's church must adhere to his principles; it is then contended that, by intercommunion with sects, those principles would not be sacrificed. 'We don't ask you,' say they, 'to indorse us as churches. We only ask a testimony of Christian fellowship—not of church fellowship.' How hard to resist such an appeal! But still, if it prevails, Christ's promise falls to the ground, and a plan against His church succeeds. It would only be an entering wedge, it is true, but the principle being established, there would soon be no limit to the extent of its influence, and 'the light of the world' would grow dim and expire in a gathering cloud of error and corruption. Error in religion is like the letting out of waters. A little channel silently and steadily widens and deepens until no barriers can arrest the rushing current. To eat the forbidden fruit was a religious error. It seemed a small one, but its consequences are im-

measurable. Oh, if Satan can only decoy Christ's church into a little error—if only to sanction the anti-christian power to change an ordinance, or to reckon the ordinance valid when changed, or to recognize the right of human societies, self-styled churches, to use God's ordinances, or in any way to treat them otherwise than as religious usurpers—if Satan, I say, could only induce the church to swerve, in some of these, or any other particulars, with what a jubilee would hell celebrate such a triumph! But such is the genius of the church that it can not apostatize and reform. A body is a church of Christ only as it derives that character from the faithful observance and display of Christ's laws. 'The gates of hell,' to prevail against the church, must utterly suppress the church, so that in Christ's kingdom on earth there should be, at least for a time, no church unflinchingly holding the ordinances, as they were delivered to it. Whenever a church departs from those principles, it forfeits its name, and becomes anti-christian in every opposing or erroneous principle which it holds. If the church of Christ were to celebrate the Lord's Supper with the Catholics or any of their ecclesiastical offshoots or descendants, or with any human organization, that act being wanting in fealty to Christ, would of itself vitiate their claim to be his church. It is impossible to hold his laws and not hold them at the same time. Truly has Satan transformed himself into a messenger of light to prevail against the church. His appeal strikes people of little religious intelligence, and no fixed principles, as a call to discharge a conscientious duty. And many comply.

“Notice the liability to be deceived by an appearance of duty to commune with Presbyterianism. Though founded by a member of Romanism, the most corrupt power on earth—though its founder received his baptism and confirmation from the same source—though it retains the striking features of its mother in infant baptism, sprinkling, and the aristocracy of its government—and though organized fifteen hundred years too late even to claim to be the church of Christ—yet it appeals to our fraternal regards with a plea almost irresistible. It does n’t allow its infant members to commune until they assume the act of their parents in having them sprinkled. The General Synod, when met in Cincinnati in 1846, most solemnly protested against, and declared utterly invalid, all baptisms administered by its mother church, Romanism. This affecting instance of filial piety in the daughter toward her mother, should almost make us forget her extraction. Indeed, many good people, with more bigotry than Bible knowledge, feel a pious obligation, instilled from unconscious infancy, to prefer that church even to Christ’s own church. To reject an appeal from such a pious body, and that when we have not more than half as much piety ourselves as we ought to have, is indeed hard. The church that does it must not only be based upon a rock, but must be built up of the same material.

“Since the bait of Presbyterianism fails to cause the church to swerve from its immutable principles, a highly improved edition is offered in the wise and consistent person of Campbellism. This frowns with utter contempt on the pillar of Romanism, infant

sprinkling, rejects the idea of involuntary or proxy worship, does not believe that baptism can change the heart or regenerate an unconscious babe, adopts the Bible form of church government, and with all this array of scripturality, and no feature of Romanism, except the baptismal regeneration of voluntary subjects, (and this it indignantly spurns the charge of teaching even by implication,) it appeals to us for our fellowship and coöperation. And how can we resist? I know no answer but the promise of the Savior: 'The gates of hell shall not prevail.' The perseverance of the church, like that of the saints, is through all manner of trials and opposition. Both are secured against apostacy. But I am aware that this is questioned in regard to both. It is believed by many that both churches and Christians can apostatize and be again reclaimed, and if not reclaimed, lost. If it is true of the one, it is of the other. If untrue of the one, it is of the other. If the church apostatize, all its members do. It is true that when a church abandons New Testament principles, its faithful members will abandon it, but the loss of these, and the corruption of the others, will destroy the church. A Bible church, without Bible principles, is an anomaly. It is possible for an organization to be almost a church. The church of Christ may be called, for illustration, the Gospel Tree. Its roots and all its branches are of the same character. A tree can not by degrees cease to have its own character, and acquire an opposite character. To be short, an organization is either scriptural or it is not. If scriptural, it is a church; if not, it is none. A sort of a church is not a Bible phrase, and suits no Bible

verity. Christ's is a perfect church. It can not be his, if it have marks of apostacy and corruption.

"It must be remembered, however, that its organization is all that is perfect. Its members are imperfect. That imperfection, however, does not incline them to abandon his organization. All of them who are converted, and know what his organization is would rather die than yield one of its features. It may have unconverted members, unawares brought in, who would be pleased with an organization less repulsive to human nature, and they will be its sorest enemies. Like an evil disease they impair the efficiency, and mar the enjoyment of the whole body. Christ's church was not designed for human nature, it was designed for regenerate nature. Every effort to secularize it proves a want of regeneration. It is a peculiar body for 'a peculiar people.' The original for this last expression is, 'a people arrogating to themselves.' God's people must both be, and claim to be unlike all others. They must wear peculiar badges, and with peculiar obstinacy refuse to conform to worldly policy and maxims. It is, no doubt, to develop their fealty to Christ that they are required to sustain and adopt a church polity so peculiar. When importuned to abandon their principles, by the promiscuous recognition of all religious sects, that blend a worldly policy with some of the principles of Christ's church, they are asked to renounce nothing less than their fealty to him. Promiscuous communion would destroy the church.

"To celebrate the Lord's Supper with a society, is to declare that society authorized to administer that Supper. Suppose that three unconverted men in

your town form a society for mutual culture in letters and morals. Has the church on that account, a grant of authority from Christ to invite them to his table? All will say, no. But suppose they resolve to meet frequently to read the Scriptures, and to read forms of prayer; could the church still invite them? No. Suppose they determine to hold an occasional feast, as a means of increasing their mutual attachment, and call it 'a love feast.' Could the church invite them on that account? Clearly not. But suppose they, like the Sons of Temperance, write out their system of morals, and rules of deportment, and invite members to join them, and receive fifty or a hundred, some converted, and some unconverted. Would the church be now warranted in proclaiming them a church and inviting them to the Lord's table? I doubt whether any one will say, yes. All will say, they are no church, and to commune with them would be wrong. All Christians would rebuke them as usurpers. But suppose some of these members become converted, and instead of joining God's church, they determine to name their society a church, and baptize such as join it. Have they a right to baptize? All will say, no. But they ordain preachers and send them out to preach, to baptize, and to administer the usurped Supper. Do all these things make them a church of Christ? Can Christians interpret the duty to 'keep the ordinances as delivered unto them,' as a permit to go to their table, and proclaim it the Lord's? Could they invite such to the Lord's table? I think all will say, not. The sketch is realized in Methodism. Three students of a college in England, while uncon-

verted, organized the society for the purpose just mentioned. They, and such as joined them, received the name Methodists. Some of them afterward became converted. They did not leave the society, though not one who aided in its organization ever consented to its being canonized by its members as a church. The same principle is realized in all the denominations opposed, in any feature, to the church of Christ. But all these editions of the church as revised by men, are so many efforts, by Satan, to prevail against the church's tenacious adherence to the principles of its establishment.

"Another interpretation of the text is given by some. The original, here rendered '*hell*,' is not *Ge-henna*, which is always used to denote the perdition of lost souls, but '*Hades*,' which the Jews understood as denoting the intermediate state of all souls, whether converted or unconverted. In this invisible region were supposed to exist two states, the one of happiness called Paradise, and the other of misery, called Tartarus. In the one or the other of these, the souls of the departed were, and still are, supposed by some to remain until the resurrection of their bodies. In this sense of the word the text gives us the consoling assurance that the grave, or death, shall never reduce the church to nothing. Death and the powers of darkness have conspired against it. Have they succeeded? Will they ever succeed?

II. "The gates of hell have not prevailed against the church of Christ. Amid all the fearful storms of persecution she has stood unmoved, as the mountain lashed by the waves of the sea, or beaten by

the angry blasts, or scathed by the lightnings of heaven. No stroke of the sword, no peal of the lash, no corrupting charms, no dreadful frowns have marred the beauty, sullied the purity, or disturbed the calm, immovable firmness of the Lamb's Bride. Lover nor friend can seduce her from her fidelity. She is the only incarnation of purity and light. Divinity alone hath preserved her from the blasting of enemies, and from the corruption of seducers. To trace her in the tide of opposition through which she has come down would indeed be interesting, and many an honest tear would tell the sympathy of God's people to-day with 'those to glory gone;' but the brevity designed will not allow more than a glance at her history to show that she has existed in every age since her establishment. That she was established in the Apostles' days will not be questioned. She set out with a declaration of the principles laid down in the speech of yesterday. She took God's revealed will as the man of her counsel; after evangelizing the people, she immersed the believers in obedience to Christ's command, and then regarded them as members, or communicants. The history of these principles held and practiced upon, is the history of the church. Their abettors have never enjoyed the privilege of naming themselves; indeed they have disregarded names in their devotion to principles. As they have depended on their enemies for a name, they have taken, at different times, and in different countries, a variety of names. The common name by which the Catholics have designated them has been Heretics, sometimes Anabaptists."

Mr. Smedley here spent fifty minutes in reading extracts from the works of Moshien, Prof. Stewart, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory Nyssen, Basil, Photius, Apostolic Constitutions, Jerome, F. Brenner, Cyril of Jerusalem, Damascenus, etc., proving to a demonstration, that there have been in all ages, up to the last of these writers, people holding these sentiments.

"We see then," continued he, "that those who held these principles were, according to Moshien and others, remarkable for the rigidity of their examination of candidates, and of their discipline. Indeed their purity of manners and discipline purchased for them the unsought name of *Cathari* or Puritans. It was given in derision, as most of their names were; but they gloried in it, because it intelligibly expressed their principles in a single word. It has often surprised me that the Campbellites so indignantly spurn the name by which alone their peculiar views are designated. I can not yet find any good reason for it, unless they are ashamed of some of A. Campbell's views. It is evident that these people rejected infant baptism in every age after it came into vogue. Professor Limborch, a Pedo-Baptist, declares that 'Pedo-Baptism was unknown in the first and second centuries.' Tertullian, in the third century, opposed it; declaring, 'we are made but not born Christians. Let children come when they grow up; when instructed whither to come; when able to know Christ.' Neander, another celebrated Pedo-Baptist historian, says: 'Faith and baptism are always united, and infant baptism was

not known in the Apostolic age.' Moshier says, 'None were admitted to baptism but such as had previously been instructed in the principal points of Christianity.'

"Their church government was congregational. Says Giesler, 'In the appointment of officers all had a voice. The new churches everywhere formed themselves on the model of the mother church at Jerusalem. At the head of each church were elders, all officially equal in rank. Each church was left to make its own particular regulations.' Moshier says, 'The churches in those early times were entirely independent. . . . A bishop, during the first and second centuries, was a person who had the care of one Christian Assembly.' Neander agrees with this sentiment as true. I can in no way better verify our Savior's promise to preserve his church, in an appeal to her history, than by an extract from an invaluable epitome of church history, by Professor A. Drury, of Covington, Ky. I shall abridge the compiler's language, and use it sometimes as memory and convenience may permit: 'Has God had a people since the days of the apostles? If so, either the Catholic or the Baptist church embraces that people; for not one of the Protestant churches is yet three hundred and fifty years old; and whoever heard of such a thing as a child being born one thousand or one thousand and two hundred years after the death of its mother?' If the Baptist church is not the true child of the primitive church, she has no child but the whore of Babylon. But to answer the question, where is their history? We know that much obscurity rests upon

some parts of it; but keep in mind the model church; . . . all the churches, for the first two hundred and fifty years, were evidently what would be called Baptist churches by all classes of men.

“In the early part of the fourth century, Constantine was converted to the Christian faith. He exerted his power as Emperor to advance the church, forgetting the Christian’s motto—The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. From this time the church ceased to be a church of God. She was secularized. Corruptions flowed in apace. Mosheim says: ‘Constantine assumed the supreme power over the church, and the right of modeling and governing her; and true religion was almost entirely superseded by horrid superstition.’ To these growing corruptions opposition became bold in the close of the third century. The blended power, civil and ecclesiastic, persecuted those who refused to bend the knee. The history of these is obscured from several causes. To keep the ordinances uncorrupted, they were forced to flee the presence of their armed and bloody persecutors. Hid in mountain fastnesses or secluded valleys, they met together in as much concealment as possible. Malice and power combined, hunted them like beasts of prey, and inhumanly butchered their men, women and children, to obliterate every trace of them from the earth. Their history, written by relentless foes, has been falsified, and they have been branded with every opprobrious epithet. From age to age, as they emerged from their retreat, when the fires of persecution have cooled for a while, we find them with a new name.

The wonder is that any of their history is known. But its obscurity no more proves their non-existence than Elijah's ignorance does, that God had in all Israel but one worshiper. Were their history wholly lost in the cloud of persecution, no Christian could doubt their uninterrupted existence. But history notes their footprints, as oases in the waste of the past.

"In 251, Novatian was ordained pastor of a church in Rome, which maintained no fellowship with the Catholic party, on account of its laxity in discipline. 'In seasons of prosperity, multitudes rushed into the church; in times of adversity, they denied the faith.' To such a state of things Novatian was opposed and refused communion. Great numbers followed his example; and all over the empire Puritan churches were constituted and flourished for two hundred years: *i. e.* till 450. 'Afterward,' says Robinson, 'when persecution compelled them to lurk in corners, and to worship God in private, they were distinguished by a variety of names, and a succession of them continued till the Reformation.' Thus much of their history, probably, no Protestant will dispute.

"Milner says 'they were the most respectable of the dissenters.' Mosheim says: 'This sect can not be accused of corrupting the doctrine of Christianity, but they compelled all who joined them from the dominant sect to be re-baptized.' As there was no baptism but immersion, they baptized them again because their former baptism was faulty in its subject. . . 'The Donatists appear to have resembled the followers of Novatian. They derived their name

from Donatus, elected bishop of Carthage A. D. 306. . . . They, in A. D. 411, sent two hundred and seventy-nine bishops to a conference held at Carthage between them and the Catholics, which must give a favorable opinion of their numbers, considering the superior strictness of their discipline, and especially that they were frequently the subjects of the severe and sanguinary persecutions of the dominant party. In 583, Justinian declared the Pope head of all the churches. This was a signal for the most intolerant persecution of all the dissenters. In the year 591, they were subdued by the Roman Pontiff.'

"Mosheim says, 'their doctrine was conformable to the church, but they re-baptized.' Long says, 'they not only re-baptized adults, but refused to baptize children, as appears from several discourses of St. Augustine.' Rulicius, quoted by Danvers and Taylor, says: 'The dissenters of this age are represented as honest and godly Christians, who, from the example of Christ, did reprove the evil custom of infant baptism.' Their history extends from 306 to 600. They were clearly a church according to the New Testament.

"Gieseler says: 'In the year 660,' ere they could have become extinct, 'the Paulicians appeared.' We have no account of them, except from their bitter enemies. Mosheim says: 'They arose in the seventh century and continued for two hundred years.' Gibbon tells us of a Syrian captive who had, as a present, the New Testament. He learned and expounded its truths. Many became his followers, and condemned, according to Gibbon, every error of

the Catholics, 'one hundred thousand,' says he, 'perished by the sword, gibbet, or the flames.'

"The council of Laodicea, in the eighth century, decreed 'that those who will come to baptism, ought first to be instructed in the faith, and to make a confession thereof.' Booth, in his Examiner, says: 'The council of Paris, A. D. 829, has this remarkable canon, viz.: In the beginning of the holy church of God, no one was admitted to baptism unless he had been instructed in the holy sacrament of faith and baptism.' About the year 970, the Patriarch of Antioch complained to the Emperor that his patriarchate was full of heretics, and begged to be freed from them. The Emperor complied with his request, but instead of extirpating them, he removed them to Philoppolis and gave them liberty of conscience. The whole adjacent country was soon filled with inhabitants, free and happy. Thence they spread all over Europe. Historians say they rejected infant baptism. Gieseler says: 'They appeared about A. D. 660, and continued A. D. 1000, and that they took the Apostle Paul for their model.'

"If they took Paul for their model, one thing seems evident, viz.: that faith in Christ was a prerequisite to baptism. We also think with Knapp, Bloomfield, Chalmers and Macknight, that they were buried with Christ in baptism. Rom. vi: 4.

"Says Gieseler, 'Connected, perhaps, with the Paulicians, were the heretics, who, originating in Italy, had, from the beginning of the 11th century, been spreading themselves throughout the West. They were discovered in Aquitaine and Orleans, A. D. 1022; in Arras, 1025; in Montefort, near Tu-

rin, 1030 ; and in Goslar, 1052. They were universally punished with death.'

"Lafrance, Archbishop of Canterbury, says, 'Bergarius,' who rejected infant baptism and the errors of Romanism, 'drew all Italy, France and England into his opinion.'—Taylor's History.

"Baronius. 'About this time (1087) the Baptists appear to have spread in various countries. Peter Abelardus, a learned man and a great opposer of infant baptism, suffered martyrdom at Rome for the same crime. At Goslar, several were executed for the same crime.'

"Mosheim. 'Among the sects that troubled the Latin church in this century, the principal place is due to the Catharists.'"

After speaking of the other sects, he says: "A much more rational sect was founded A. D., 1110, by Peter de Bruys, who made laudable attempts to reform the abuses, and remove the superstitions which disfigured the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel; and after having engaged in this cause a great many followers, during a laborious ministry of twenty years, he was burnt at St. Giles, A. D., 1130, by an angry populace, set on by the clergy, whose craft was in danger. His whole system is not known. But he held these tenets: First, that no persons whatever were to be baptized, until they came to the full use of reason. Secondly, that the real body and blood of Christ were not present in the Eucharist. Third, that prayers for the dead are useless. According to Mosheim, he was followed by Henry, an Italian, the founder of the Henricians. For opposing infant baptism and other abuses, he was, 1148, imprisoned

by Pope Eugenius III, where he shortly after died. About 1170 Waldo flourished, the founder of the Waldenses, according to Moshier and Gieseler. McLaine contradicts the notion that Waldo founded and gave name to the Waldenses, alleging that he took his name from them. This matter is indifferent, only so far as it shows the existence of these people. In 1250, the bloody inquisitor, Rinerius Sacco, labored zealously for their destruction. He calls them Leonists, and declares them to have existed over 500 years. Mosheim identifies these with the Waldenses. Their tenets prove them Baptists. Gretzer, a Jesuit who wrote against them, expresses his belief that the Toulousians and Albigenses, condemned 1177 and 1178, were no other than the Waldenses. The proof of this is overwhelming. A. D., 1197, says the Monk William Newburg, 'the sect called Publicani, being numerous as the sand of the sea, did sorely infest both France, Italy, Spain, and Germany.' In 1209, in France, an army of between 300,000 and 500,000 soldiers was raised to exterminate the heretics, and in a few months slaughtered 200,000. These crusades continued till 1243, when 1,000,000 had perished; and yet, in 1260, they had churches in Albania, Lombardy, Milan, Romagna, Vicenza, Florence, Constantinople, Philadelphia, Selavonia, Bulgaria, Diagonitia, and subsequently Sicily, Livonia, Sarmatia, etc. A. D., 1315, in Bohemia alone there was said to be 80,000. A. D., 1530, says one of their pastors, there were said to be 800,000 Waldenses. From the middle of 13th century, for a hundred and thirty years, they enjoyed *comparative ease*. About 1400, persecution again

raged in the valley Pragela, in Piedmont, so cruelly by the Catholics against the Waldenses, that for a whole century, even the Catholics called it 'the cruel scene.' From 1540 to 1550, they suffered cruelties too horrible to relate. No mercy was shown to age or sex. From 1550 to 1600 they are found in various countries in Europe." Thus far I have relied on Prof. Drury for a brief of Baptist Church History. He only traces them to the end of the sixteenth century; not because they are traceable no further; for I think I shall make out their history, on the very best authority, up to the present. In the sixteenth century, we find the Baptists in England with the name *Lollards*; in Europe, they still retained their general name Ana-Baptists; but about that time they were also called *Mennonites*. About the middle of the sixteenth century, Strype says: "The Baptists pestered the church, and would openly dispute their principles in public places. . . . Over 70,000 of them were, in King Henry's time, punished by fines, by imprisonment, by banishment, or by burning." Indeed, from the sixteenth century forward, there is no want of Baptist literature. One of their books, on the liberty of conscience in religion, was published in 1615. A vindication of their views was published in 1618. Indeed, all their enemies contend that they arose in this century, and have existed ever since. I mean, of course, those enemies who now speak against us. As far back as thirty or forty years ago, there was not a man who wrote for the public eye, and was so ignorant or so dishonest, as to deny our existence even before that time. But now are found in great abundance those

who scruple not to deny the testimony of all history—who would ‘change times and customs’—in order to supplant Scripture by tradition. But it all amounts to nothing; if history were silent as the grave as to the perpetuity of the church, we should not be confused as to the constitution we are required to adopt here to-day. For that is to be found only in the Bible—but I have traced the history of the church to show that our Savior’s promise, ‘On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it,’ has been kept by him. Cromwell’s age was about the middle of the seventeenth century. Through his influence, thousands of Baptists came from obscurity into light. ‘Persons of this persuasion,’ says Russell, ‘filled the army with preaching, and praying, and valiant men.’ They were numerous and bold. Not ashamed of their doctrine, they proclaimed it in all places. When, at the malevolent instigation of the Presbyterians, Cromwell renewed the persecution of them, they sent a remonstrance, in which they asked ‘if Baptists had not filled his towns, cities, provinces, islands, castles, navies, tents, armies, and court.’

“The following is from a learned German, published in Holland, at Breda, by D’Uprey, Professor of Theology in the University Gottingen, and Rev. J. J. Dermont, Chaplain to the King of the Netherlands, both learned Pedit-Baptists: ‘We have seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Ana-Baptists, and in latter times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who have long, in the history of the church, received the honor of that origin. On this account, the Baptists may be considered the only

Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles, and as a Christian society, which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel in all ages. The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish church, that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was in the highest degree necessary; and at the same time, goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics, that their church is the most ancient.'

"But it is needless to trace our history further. As the risen sun destroys the need of artificial light and covers earth with its beams, so our history fills the last two centuries with the evidences of its existence.

"We need not burrow through the gloom of the world's night to trace the indestructible and golden chain of our history. Like the beautiful bow of promise, it now spans every Gospel-lit continent and island on earth.

"That 'the gates of hell have not prevailed against the church,' is now deemed manifest. That they never will, the veracity of Zion's King is pledged. As Christians can not doubt his word, and none others feel special interest in the fulfillment of this promise, I will dismiss this point without further remark.

"The church is Christ's court on earth. Its functions are important. Its duties are to keep the ordinances in their original purity and simplicity, to guard them against the perversions and usurpations of designing men, and of corrupt combinations. The church is neither to give the ordinances to the

impenitent and unbelieving, nor to connive at their usurpation by human societies. It is also to evangelize the world by its ministry. The appointment of officers devolves upon the church. Whom they baptize, the church recognizes. What they preach, the church sanctions. It is, then, needful to guard well the pulpit. To clothe with its functions the unworthy, is to veil its own light with disgrace. To sustain the apostate and the heretical, is to foster, with our influence, the seeds of death it would then disseminate.

“If the church be Heaven’s constituted power for the creation and perpetuity of the gospel ministry, it has also Heaven’s authority to silence corrupt and heretical ministers. When once it appoints a man, his official acts are valid, though his heart may be black as the ace of spades. When it revokes his credentials, his official acts are invalid, though he be fair as an angel, and learned as a rabbi. I can’t sympathize with the question sometimes raised in our churches, whether baptisms performed by A. Campbell, and his followers, are valid. Campbell was expelled by a gospel church for incorrigibly preaching ‘damnable heresy.’ He had no longer the right to preach, or to baptize, or to administer the Supper. He could not give to his followers what he did not have. The same is true of other human societies, self-styled churches. If their baptism is valid, it can only be because they have a right to administer it. If they have that right, they have equal right to celebrate the Supper, and to appoint ministers, and we have no right, when one of their ministers joins us—as many do—to elect and ordain

him again to the office of the ministry; for we have already recognized his official acts, which we can not do without recognizing him as officially qualified to perform them. To recognize him as such, is to pronounce the society by which he was appointed a church, and then are we bound, by consistency and charity, to fraternize with it throughout, and of course to commune with it. I can not but reject, as utterly invalid, every act performed as a church act, by any denomination in existence, except the Baptist.

“For this I am styled an uncharitable bigot, and it is not my business to show a harmony between the peculiar laws of Christ’s church, and the temporizing proclivities of human nature. I will just consent to be called a bigot. My Savior was called no better, and he forewarned me to expect no better.

“In conclusion, I have been trying to declare truth. You are all, as much as I, in need to know it. Taught by Judge Rolen’s admonition not to be too studious of popularity, I have studied very little to keep you from being displeased by my manner of presenting truth. Had I come to sell you a parcel of Yankee Notions, in which I was to be the benefited party, I should have felt the need of oiling my words. But I have been in haste to tell you, as fast as possible, what, if you are sensible people, you have come to learn. If you complain because it has been told with bluntness, you will display your own weakness.

“If the truths told are unpleasant—provided they be truths—your disaffection should not be toward the messenger, but toward the author of those

truths. People sometimes become raving mad with me, because I ask them for the Scripture which, they say, speaks of infant baptism. We shall all soon meet at the bar of God to account for the advantages here enjoyed. With my thanks for your kind attention, I now relieve your patience."

When Mr. Smedley was seated, the Chairman called for voluntary addresses for or against the proposed union. The eminent Dr. Robinson, of the Presbyterian church, had come all the way from the city of B——, by the earnest solicitation of the stanch and unmoved Presbyterians in L——. He felt that his craft was in danger. He was a man of towering abilities. There was no sophism which the alembic of his genius could not fuse into vapor. Beneath the stroke of his pen have crumbled the proudest monuments of infidelity. The pealing flashes of his towering genius might scathe and shatter all but the stern Rock of truth. All who knew him were breathless with anxiety to know whether he would favor or frown upon the object of the Convention. Many believed his powerful touch would either crush or crown it with success. If he should oppose, it was feared none would have the nerve to answer him. He is a giant in thought, and he digs and illumines his own path through the labyrinths of discussion. How ardent the hopes of many that he will either espouse the great cause, or remain silent. But, alas! such hopes were vain. His cogitations are busy in collecting the energies of his mighty mind for the destruction he has decreed against the enterprise he has not duly considered. After such a pause as modesty would dictate, he rises.

CHAPTER XII.—*The Shallow Sophism.*

"THIS immense assembly," said he, "is doubtless convened by the exalted estimate in which the objects of this convention, as published abroad, are held by the people. I came attracted by the commendable object of forming an alliance of Christians of all denominations. I did not arrive in due time to hear the speech of yesterday, which, from accounts, I doubt not was a masterly effort, and altogether to the purpose. I have been pained and disappointed this morning, by the manifest effort to turn this unparalleled excitement into a sectarian channel, and to build up one church to the disparagement of all the others. I judge all by one when I express the belief that the address we have just had is very generally, if not universally, considered discourteous and ill-timed. I am warmly in favor of some alliance of all Christians by which a more harmonious coöperation can be secured in the great work of evangelizing man. But my views are not so contracted as to expect such alliance in the Presbyterian church. I do not arise to eulogize it; if I did I should not like to acknowledge, with all our past inefficiency, that we had over 1800 years' history. I should press the point of our origin only about 300 years ago—that our organization was never completed until 1789, by the establishment of the General Assembly; that with this recent origin and tardy completion of our church, we are scarcely inferior in a single element of real power to any

church in the world. I would advert to the number and talent of our ministry, and to the number and commanding influence of our literary and theological colleges. But I do not rise to make a special plea to get everybody to join our church, and thus break up all others. This I would not do if I could. We claim not to be *the* church; we are not so bigoted. We are only a branch of it. It is pleasant to think we are all branches of the same great church which 'Christ loved, and gave himself that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.' We surely have not met to destroy all the churches but one in the vain hope that it will then absorb all Christians and become a mammoth establishment. For my part I know no consideration that could induce me to give up my church, and yet I am heartily willing to unite with all who love God in the great cause of the world's conversion. Indeed I am glad there are so many denominations. While they differ in non-essentials they are one in the essentials of Christianity. 'I am the vine,' said the Savior, 'and ye are the branches.' While we all derive life, growth and action from Christ, we are different branches. For illustration, we have one branch of young and luxuriant growth. It overtops all the others and is sometimes very fruitful, and at others some of its leaves and fruits are blasted; but it is a branch, and we would not destroy it. It is Methodism. Another branch looks as if it grew in a cold clime; its leaves and fruit are neat and regular; its twigs are stiff and unbending. It is of slow but steady growth. This, too, is a branch, and we must not destroy it. It is Episcopacy. Another

runs along by the rivers, creeks, and bathing places, and 'like a tree planted by the rivers of waters,' it is deep-rooted, vigorous and fruitful; but it is only a branch. This is the Baptist church. Neither must we destroy that. Thus might I show how beautifully our Savior's parable of the vine and the branches is realized in the thousand and one denominations that have risen since the advent of Messiah. He is the Sun, they are the planets, which of different magnitudes, and at different distances, revolve around him, as their great center. All get their light from him. Some have more, some less light than others; but all belong to the system, and there is only one system. But before I advance, I must inquire of Mr. Chairman if I have not misunderstood the object of the convention. That object has been represented to me as being an earnest effort to discover the basis of Bible truth on which all Christians can unite and coöperate in the great work of the world's conversion; but from the discourse of this morning, one might infer that after all the ado about a union of Christians, the design is only to organize a Baptist church in the village of L——. In the former case I feel a deep interest; in the latter I could have nothing to do. You will oblige me by giving the explanation."

Mr. Chairman. "A large majority of all the religious denominations in our community, except the Episcopalians, have, from influences originating among ourselves, concluded that according to the Scriptures, the world can never be converted until religious schisms are destroyed, and God's people united on a common basis, or merged into one

scriptural church. We agree that no church among us is scriptural in all its features. We believe that all Christians can live in a church entirely scriptural, and it is the purpose of this convention to develop the scriptural organization for a church, that we may all join it. From our investigations we have reached the conclusion—unpleasant at first, but now not so repulsive—that we shall have to be Baptists. We invited Mr. Smedley from Virginia, that we might have the aid and counsel of a Baptist minister along with the other denominations. We have become willing and anxious for all the denominations to die out, except that which is exactly scriptural. If that can not be found, we intend here to form one, and shall be highly gratified by the aid of your extensive Bible knowledge and unsurpassed learning.”

Dr. Robinson. “If that is your design you will have no further use for me, for I look upon the attempt as perfectly chimerical, and shall not permit my own folly to be chronicled with such a failure. If you will permit me, I may give some aid to form the conclusion I have reached, and you will thus the sooner end your vain labors. To this end allow me to recommend the remarks I have already made. I deem them quite conclusive.”

For a few moments silence prevailed, while Dr. Robinson was congratulating himself that he had put the whole movement to confusion by the aptness of his parable. Judge Rolen winked to Mr. Mullens to answer him, when he rose and said:

“I’m only a backwoodsman and don’t know who the stranger is, but his sophistry don’t weigh much with me; there is a plenty of people that are glad

of the schisms in Christ's body, and so is the devil; but if all people and the devil, too, were glad of them it would not make them right. If the brother will read his Bible closely, he will see that Christ was talking to his disciples when he said, 'Ye are the branches.' There warn't any sects in existence then. I'll venture, if every one will think and act for himself, we'll form a Bible church and all join it, either to-day or before this convention closes, unless it's somebody with more bigotry than piety. And the church would be better off without that sort. With these few remarks I'll say no more."

Chairman. "If you will always speak as briefly and as much to the point, you had better take back your promise 'to speak no more.'"

The great Doctor was completely disposed of. His fruitless effort to turn the convention from its purpose only strengthened the hearts of its friends. If a thousand D.D.'s had, after this, tried to laugh to scorn their object, I do not believe it would have shaken one of them. Silence now reigned for a few moments, while awaiting a response to the chairman's remarks. The doctor was silent, and the chairman said:

"At least ten thousand people, on yesterday, voted their conviction that religious schism hinders the world's conversion. I desire to learn how many Christians, to-day present, are willing to join this convention in its object, not to form a Baptist church, as you may have been led to suppose, but to agree on the only scriptural basis of a church, and then adopt that. We have resolved to make nothing a term of church organization which we can not, to

the satisfaction of every Christian, prove scriptural. It is believed that all present on yesterday, saw the practicability of such an object. Many of you may now wish yourselves absent. You may wish 'to confer with flesh and blood,' before voting on such a proposition. If you vote, you stand committed. If you refuse, you will suffer yourself to be counted against the object of the convention, and all present will know that you hold some tenets which, though you can not prove scriptural, you will not renounce for the glory of God and the conversion of the world both combined. This will be the severe test vote of this convention. But if you are not sufficiently influenced by the fear of God to act on your individual responsibility, and to do right, though the heavens fall; we need you not as a member of this convention, or of God's church, and shall willingly count you against us. You need not vote at all, unless you are willing to renounce all tradition, and to take all Scripture as your rule of faith and practice. You will have the privilege of moving the adoption of any sentiment you choose, but your only way of having it adopted is to prove it scriptural. All are supposed now ready for the question."

Judge Rolan. "Before you take that vote, I suggest that it be understood that all the voters will be entitled to seats in the convention as members; and while all are invited to be present, these all, and only these, can take part in the future actions of the convention. If there is no objection it would be well to include this in your proposition."

Chairman, after a pause. "There seems no objection. These, then, are the questions on which your

votes are now solicited. Are you willing, for the union of all God's people, to renounce any sentiment which you, *individually*, can not prove scriptural; and to adopt any that may be so proved to your *individual* satisfaction? Christians only are invited to vote. You will please rise and stand until we can form an idea of the extent of the vote."

The Doctor was in a pitiable attitude. He hated to vote against what he had just said, and had been saying all his life, and yet he hated almost as much to acknowledge that he held unscriptural tenets, which he would not renounce for the world's conversion; and in great agitation he retained his seat. Among the voters were nearly all the Presbyterians in L—— and vicinity, a majority of the Methodists, a good number of the Reformers, some of the most spiritual Episcopalians, and a multitude from a distance which no man could number. It is impossible to describe the scene. During the whole session, scarcely five minutes elapsed without evidence that another soul was set at liberty. The wicked looked as if they thought the day of judgment had come. Dr. Robinson looked puzzled.

Mr. Mullens. "It's growing late; and I move that we appoint one man from each denomination, including Judge Rolen, of no denomination, as a committee to draw up such a constitution as they all can agree is scriptural, and present it for our ratification on to-morrow."

This motion passed without opposition.

Committee. Judge Rolen, no denomination; Rev. R. G. Lockett, Baptist; Rev. S. T. Rue, Episcopalian; Rev. G. K. Simmons, Methodist; Rev. H. O. Hall,

Reformer ; Rev. R. Osgood, Old School Presbyterian ; Rev. Samuel Peters, New School Presbyterian ; T. F. Raymond, Esq., Congregationalist.

These are all the denominations that were represented there. After the announcement of preaching at night, and sunrise prayer-meeting in the morning at all the churches opened the previous night, the meeting adjourned, till ten o'clock on Saturday.

A hurried conversation now took place at the stand between Messrs. Smedley, Todd, and others.

Mr. Sellers. "The great Dr. Robinson, from the city of B——, is with us to-day. He is the gentleman whom Brother Mullens so abruptly and so effectually disposed of."

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Smedley. "We must have him preach to-night. I would travel twenty miles to hear him. He had a bad cause to-day, or his mark could not have been easily effaced. Shall we not have him to preach?"

Mr. Todd drew a sigh as he remarked, "I have no greater paragon of pulpit power and eloquence; but I doubt the propriety of having him to preach. He can not have the best of feelings toward the convention, and if he would not give up tradition for the world's conversion, I confess I have no fellowship for him, and believe his preaching would injure the deep interest now felt in this community. God knows the heart, and if it is not set on obedience, He will not bless its offering. Much as I should like to hear him, I could not now trust our cause in his hands."

"I can't help agreeing with you," said Mr. Sellers, "for I have the full persuasion that God's work be-

gan to be revived among us from the time that some of us became willing to give up tradition for the sake of His cause. For my own part, as long as I preached here, I saw no indications of the Divine blessing, until I gave up my unscriptural notions. Since then, my own soul has been blessed, and my ministry has been fruitful. No, I can not consent for Dr. Robinson, after such a demonstration of his unconcern for the salvation of sinners, as he gave just now, to address the dying hundreds that will go to-night to each house of worship opened."

"You Pedobaptists," replied Mr. Smedley, "when you do get your eyes open, and determine to renounce tradition, become the most ultra people I ever knew. What is the reason? Is it that you are sensible of having long neglected what you knew to be your duty, and suspect your former brethren for doing the same thing now? It is not always safe to measure another's coat by your own pattern."

"It looks to me," replied Mr. Sellers, "so much like Infidelity in a man, who refuses to give up tradition for the world's conversion, that I can't believe he would do any good."

"In good faith, Brother Sellers," earnestly replied Mr. Smedley, "did you not once feel unwilling to make the sacrifice you have now made? Remember how hard it is for a great man to change his public views. He may not have studied the matter."

It was finally agreed that the Doctor should be requested to preach, and Mr. Sellers was appointed to request him to do so. When Mr. Sellers had invited him, he sarcastically replied, "Why, sir, I

understood from to-day's proceedings, that your convention denies that ours is a church of Christ. If you will satisfy me whether I am or not correct in this, I will answer you without delay."

Mr. S. "I could only answer your question so far as my own opinion is concerned; but I see not how it can affect the case. Inferring from your remark that you would decline preaching, if assured that the convention thinks as you suppose, I would ask, if you are as many, who love only such as indorse their peculiar views, and would rather take pleasure in displeasing all others."

"Not at all," replied the Doctor; "I only think it strange and inconsistent in you to invite one, whom you pronounce a member of no church, to preach. I could not comply with an invitation delivered under such circumstances."

"Without pronouncing the circumstances such as you have supposed," replied *Mr. S.*; "I must say that I do not see the inconsistency of the invitation so clearly as you seem to see it. Do you regard the mere act of preaching a church office, that can not be filled by any one except appointed by the church?"

"Certainly; our church will not allow it by anybody and everybody."

"Making, as I do, a great distinction between a preacher and a minister, I am compelled to differ from you. I have ever thought it right to have the private members of our church to exercise in public by prayer and exhortation. Many a time, when I have been absent from our church on the Sabbath, *Mr. McGruder*, a prominent lawyer of our church, has

conducted the exercises very much to the edification and satisfaction of the people. "Do you think it was wrong?"

"Oh, no! I often do, and love to do the like myself; but that is a different case."

"Not at all; unless your being considered no member of a church would make that difference."

"That is the difference; and a very important one, I assure you."

"Consistency is a jewel! If I am not misinformed, you have, at least, allowed the practice. Did not several of your young converts in the revival of B——, last winter, exhort publicly, and even lead the prayer-meetings sometimes, and that before joining the church at all?"

"Yes; and I heartily approved of it; and I must confess my reason for declining is more inconsistent than your invitation. But you must still allow me to decline, because, with all respect to your feelings, I would rather be excused."

"At your request, of course, we will excuse you, though the invitation was a sincere one, and hundreds would have been gratified by your compliance. But I would remark, in justice to my own views, that if to invite or to hear a man preach, necessarily indorses his church as one of Christ's, I should be very unwilling to hear you, or to invite you to preach. We are required to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good; and under this duty, I would infer the possibility of learning a great many good things even from those who are not infallibly correct in all things." With this closed the conversation.

All efforts to record the interest of the night meeting would be in vain. Millennial glory was thought to be dawning. Such power the Gospel had never before displayed in the memory of any present. The morning-prayer meetings were all crowded, and interesting beyond description. The whole populace seemed spellbound by a reverence for religion.

Pursuant to adjournment, the Convention was organized by singing, reading, and prayer, at ten o'clock, on Saturday. There was no perceptible diminution in the extent of the crowd. Indeed, a thousand, more or less, could scarcely have been seen to affect the size of the multitude. The proposition adopted at the close of the meeting the day preceding, was repeated by the chairman, and assurance given that all who felt willing to sanction it, would be considered members of the Convention, and entitled to equal privileges. The minutes being heard, and adopted, the report of the Committee on a Constitution, was called for, and read as follows:

"The Committee charged with the duty to draft a Scriptural constitution for the Church of Jesus Christ in L——, beg leave to report, that we have felt the need of the Spirit breathed in the closing resolution of yesterday's meeting. Every variety of religious sentiment we have had to accommodate. It has therefore been after much brotherly discussion of our little differences, and examination into their real weight and value, that we have concurred in the following articles. Nothing but the stringent and reasonable resolution of yesterday, 'to give up all we could not prove Scriptural, and to adopt

what is so proved,' has kept us from disbanding in confusion and bitterness. We are now all agreed, and are happy in the agreement. We are free to confess that the greatest difficulty we have had to meet was a reverence for tradition. Some of us have held it in some points as equal in authority with the Bible itself. We have, in the outset of our efforts, given each his evidences of conversion. In these we have been entirely harmonious, and like drops of kindred fluid, our hearts have run together, and are so cemented by love and fellowship, that finite considerations could not bribe us to break the ties we must continually love to cherish. It may be that this vast concourse of God's people will deem our Covenant too simple to be made the constitution of a church; and if so, it can be altered or amended when you have received our report.

"COVENANT.

"Having, through Jesus Christ, obtained mercy and acceptance with God, we agree to unite ourselves with all of like precious faith, to guard the ordinances of Christ, and to furnish the world with the Gospel, and to promote our mutual growth in grace, by private and social worship; and to avoid, as far as possible, the controversies which mark the various schisms of the age, we make the following the principles of our union:

1. "We will invite such, and only such, to join us as give full evidence of faith in Christ. On this point, we must see manifest a sorrow for sin, a willingness to forsake it, and to repair the injuries done in wickedness, and to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in all things, without cavil or hesitation.

2. "On the manifestation of such evidence, every candi-

date for membership must be immersed by some one whom the church may have appointed to fill the office of minister.

3. "We agree that the design of immersion, as well as of all other Christian acts and duties, is to obey our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and thus honor him as the only Captain of our salvation.

4. "That all persons thus inducted into our union, in whatever part of the world, have a Scriptural right to come to the Lord's Table; and that to allow others, would be unscriptural, and subversive of the church.

5. "That in all matters of faith and discipline, the Bible shall be our only source of appeal.

6. "That all the members of the whole church, when met for business, shall have each an equal right to vote in the reception and expulsion of members, and in the election of church officers.

"Signed by the Committee."

The report was received, the Committee discharged, and the articles considered one by one and discussed.

CHAPTER XIII.—*The Difficulty Solved.*

THE Committee's report being received, it was voted to consider each article of the covenant separately.

1st. The preamble was re-read and adopted without discussion. The first article of the covenant was then taken up and considered. Its adoption being seconded, Rev. Mr. Singleton, from H ———, arose and remarked, "that he "could not oppose that article,

because he thought it well for adults on joining the church to give full evidence of conversion, but," said he, "the covenant makes no provision for infant membership. Did the committee forget to insert a provision for that?"

Judge Rolan. "It was mentioned and strenuously urged, but no one of our number could cite the Scripture authority for it, and we finally agreed to leave it out. But it will be very easy to insert a clause providing for it, if any one can show the Scripture proof that infants are to be members of the church. It will be remembered we have agreed to adopt as church articles only what each one can agree is Scriptural."

Mr. Singleton. "If Baptism under the New Testament Dispensation is the same as circumcision under the Old, I think infant membership very fairly inferable. We should make short speeches, and I will not elaborate."

Judge R. "If baptism does take the place of circumcision, it seems to me it will spring several very perplexing questions. 1. Why has not circumcision ceased to be observed among the Jews? 2. How can we infer the right of females to baptism? 3. How can we exclude from it the adult descendants of those who become members? 4. How can we exclude their servants, whether born in their families, or bought with their money? 5. As every Jew partook of the Passover, how can we exclude from the supper now our infants and servants. But I accept the brother's hint to make short speeches, and will pledge myself to adopt infant membership, with all the legitimate consequences of its succession to cir-

cumcision, if the brother will give a Bible text showing that it did come in the room of circumcision."

Several moments passed in silence, when the Judge remarked, as he discovered the embarrassment of Mr. Singleton, that he "would not be particular to demand such Bible text of Brother Singleton; that any one who could might adduce it with the same effect."

Mr. Singleton turned to Dr. Robinson with an imploring look, and so clearly signified a petition for help that the Doctor understood him and shook his head.

"Your demand is reasonable," said Mr. Singleton, "but I can not to-day think of such text in the Bible."

Judge. "To relieve this and all similar difficulties, I move that we agree to adopt infant baptism whenever any one will adduce the required text from the Bible."

"Agreed!" said Mr. Singleton, as if delighted with the notion, and it was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Hall. "I must make a short speech on that article. The *bona fide* members of my denomination will all be excluded by it. We are wont to deny all evidence of conversion before baptism. With us conversion means baptism. It is so explained by Elder A. Campbell. But I don't object to the article. I came very near losing my soul by the view our denomination takes of conversion. A church should be a home for the converted, and I shall vote for the resolution." The vote was unanimous.

The second article, requiring the immersion of all the converts by some one appointed by a regular

Gospel church to administer the ordinance, was then taken up. Judge R. moved its adoption, remarking that "all the different denominations consider immersion a valid mode."

"I object to taking the vote on that motion yet," said Mr. Smedley, "we are now trying to agree in the one baptism which will preclude all others, and satisfy every Christian. I propose that brother Moderator take the suffrages of this convention for each of the several baptisms generally practiced in our land. In that way each can express his preference."

Chairman. "The suggestion is a good one. I hope all will vote your sentiments. As the crowd is so great, you will please vote by rising and standing until we can count the votes. We will take the vote for each mode in the same way. All whose consciences would be satisfied to see sprinkling become the universal and only mode of baptism will now rise."

"Excuse a moment's interruption," said an intelligent looking stranger, "I have always advocated and practiced that mode. But I can not now vote for it. My conscience is no longer satisfied with it, and especially could I not be willing for it to become the universal and only mode. I could not refrain from speaking, lest my numerous acquaintances here to-day should notice my not voting, and ascribe it to a wrong motive. My notions have changed since I came to this Convention; and the greatest change of which I am conscious, is that I now feel resolved to have Bible authority for all I practice in the future."

Chairman. "Much obliged to the stranger for his speech. We can afford to pause much longer for such."

During a pause of several minutes, a considerable number arose and remarked that the stranger's speech had expressed their views and feelings. The question being then called, the chairman distinctly laid the motion before the Convention. Said he, "all whose consciences would be satisfied to see sprinkling become the universal and only mode of baptism will vote." Ninety-three arose.

Chairman. "It is plain from the nature of the question to be voted on, that those who have just voted that their consciences would be satisfied with sprinkling, may possibly have the same feelings toward pouring or immersion. It may be that the very ones can vote for all three of the modes. We wish you to answer each question as your consciences may dictate. All whose consciences would be satisfied to see pouring become the universal and only mode of baptism will vote." One hundred and two voted. It was thought that nearly every one who voted before, voted this time; perhaps every one. The question was then taken on immersion.

Chairman. "All whose consciences would be satisfied to see immersion become the universal and only mode of baptism, will vote."

The crowd arose, but a thousand might have refused to rise and not been noticed.

Chairman. "We can't count this vast multitude. You will please be seated. All whose consciences would not be satisfied to see immersion become the universal and only mode of baptism, will vote. If,

before God, it would injure your consciences to see all who love God united in one church, and harmonizing in their baptism, and that baptism immersion, I beseech you to rise. O, my friends, let nothing intimidate you. If you think immersion wrong, vote against it. It is your duty to do so." After a short pause, a well-dressed gentleman, with only one arm, arose from his seat near the stand and said:

"Mr. Chairman: I am unwilling to contribute any longer the influence of my silence to the dangerous policy which this blinded and enthusiastic multitude seem about to sanction. I have waited thus long in the hope that some one else would tear away the vail which has made blind the assembly; but I now feel that I should be faithless to the interests it is my duty to sustain in the circuit over which I preside, and should be obnoxious to the censures of that glorious body, the Conference from which I received the appointment of Elder, if I should continue silent. I deem it only necessary to warn the enthusiastic thousands now present how they commit themselves to an enterprise whose very remembrance may embitter their entire future with vain regrets. I tell you," continued he, as boiling over with the ardor of his declamation, he mounted upon a bench, and said, "I tell you, my dying and responsible friends, that you are in danger. I beg you to beware! I am astonished that there is not, in all this crowd, one who has the nerve to stand up for his principles. Mr. President, I know it is not conviction that has spellbound this audience, and if you will do me the favor once more to take the vote, I think you will see a very different result. I thank

you for your indulgence." As he resumed his seat near one of the preachers of his circuit, that preacher grasped his hand warmly and whispered in his ear words no doubt of congratulation; for the vote being once more taken those two only were seen to rise. "Only two," said the Chairman, "even now 'have the nerve' to declare themselves unwilling to see immersion the prevalent and only mode of baptism practiced by Christians. The Clerk will please record their names; they are Elder Redman and Mr. Wheeler. Immersion is then the mode preferred. Shall I now declare the second article adopted?"

Mr. H. "The point is settled with me; but I make the inquiry to avoid misunderstanding. Can our union so far recognize the validity of baptism administered by denominations not in fellowship with us as to receive members from them without re-baptism?"

The Stranger. "It seems to me that question is answered in the article itself. Our union can not authorize administrators in other denominations. If we receive their baptism, we shall, according to the clear showing of yesterday's address, by that very act indorse them as churches, and instead of reducing schisms, give the full weight of our sanction to aid their perpetuity. I hate to say that the opposite view can not be inferred from the article, but I did not so understand it."

Mr. H. "Neither did I; but I was desirous that attention should be called to that point. A valid baptism can only be administered by a *bona fide* Gospel church. If a church opposed to ours is right, it proves ours wrong. I should be better

satisfied if our Chairman would get an expression on this point."

Chairman. "It is also my understanding that baptisms by other denominations would be invalid with us. Those of a contrary opinion will please vote by rising." None rose. "I will now declare the second article adopted. We are now ready to consider the third, which declares the design of immersion to be nothing more nor less than to obey the King in Zion, or to show our allegiance to Him."

Mr. H. "I have considered its design very different; but it is my highest pleasure and happiness to-day, to agree with that article. I had thought it God's appointed method for washing away sin; had deemed it as essential to forgiveness as repentance or faith. But God be praised that I have seen my error in due time to take refuge in Christ. Whatever we may say about the suggestive grandeur and symbolic beauty of immersion, a converted Bible student, I am persuaded, can consider it only designed to show the obedient disposition of its subjects, and not to secure the remission of sin. Another design, no doubt, God had in appointing the three ordinances, Baptism, the Supper, and the Ministry, which was to give visibility to his church, and to plead, as living monuments, to his remembrance; but after all we can say about these, its design is to declare our faith and obedience to Christ."

Chairman. "Though it be but little to the purpose, I feel, too, like acknowledging the error of my former belief on this point. In fact I never have been able to see the propriety of the name which our confes

sion of faith gives to baptism. It calls it a 'seal.' But we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God. And then we are compelled to make it one thing to believers and another to infants. I much like the design here ascribed to it. It keeps prominently public the idea that its subject is a believer. A disobedient believer is as great an anomaly as an obedient unbeliever. But I beg pardon, others may desire to speak before the vote is taken."

The question was called for and the article unanimously adopted.

Article fourth, declaring it to be the duty of all such, and only such, as belong to churches in fellowship with us, to receive the Lord's Supper. Its adoption being moved, several rose at once to speak. The chairman decided that Mr. Theus had the floor, and he said: "That is the only article in the covenant I feel like altering. I never can consent to be a close communionist. I sometimes think I have in my nature a painful amount of generosity and companionableness. I think I can give up any thing that principle requires, but I do not see that it requires us to be so exclusive. My wife is opposed, I fear, irreconcilably opposed to this union. Now, shall I, by joining it, be forced to decline communing with her among the Presbyterians? I could not stand it; there is not a feeling in my impulsive nature but recoils at the thought." Quite a lengthy silence followed, and as no one spoke, it was concluded that all who had arisen to speak at first, agreed with Mr. Theus, and felt satisfied with his speech.

Judge. "There can be no close communion in our

church, because it has no schismatic principles. Mrs. Theus, in joining our church, would have no unscriptural principle to subscribe. To take the Supper with it, is exactly one with joining it, so far as principle is concerned. If she can not join us, it must be because of some objectionable principle we hold. If, then, she commune with us, she will have to indorse that objectionable feature."

Mr. Theus. "I see the force of your argument, so far as it keeps her from communing with *us*; but I might want to commune with *her*; and you did not meet that case."

Judge. "Christians regard consistency a great jewel. I can very soon show you that you can't think of attending a Presbyterian communion table. It is not the Lord's table, unless spread by the Lord's church. If ours is the Lord's church, the Presbyterian is not; because, as you say, it irreconcilably opposes ours. If you go to that table, you proclaim it God's church, and thus deny that yours is his at all." "I see," said Mr. Theus. "But I am not through," said the Judge. "If ours be the church of Christ, it is the indispensable duty of all his people to join it. If they can not submit to its principles, it is because they can not submit to its King. But I tell you, all who are his can and will submit, when they understand the principles of his organization. If we can only succeed in explaining them clearly, they will attract and attach every Christian in every community. There will be no Christians left in opposing organizations. That the bigoted and the hypocritical will remain there, I have no doubt. Now, as to the charity of the thing. You

see a Christian, for instance, your wife, deceived by the idea that she is in Christ's church, when you know she is not; and instead of using all your influence to convince her of the great crime of joining a sham church, in what they call the Lord's Supper, you, every now and then, join her in that crime. It is such charity as the devil uses, when he baits the people of God into sin and sorrow—such as I should use if, when I should see you about to drink, for a wholesome draught, a dose of deadly poison, I should not tell you of your error, but should join you in it. I should have charity enough to entice you into self-destruction and to die along with you. This is precisely the character of that charity which some persons boast, when they censure a faithful effort to tear the mask from a soul-deluding error, and lead the deceived into the light of truth. God says, 'Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and shalt not suffer sin upon him.' We are, therefore, chargeable with any error in our neighbor, that we make no effort to correct."

Chairman. "Several arose at once to speak, and had to resume their seats. The floor is now vacant, and we shall be pleased to hear from them."

Another stranger (after a pause). "I arose to advance the sentiments which Mr. Theus advanced. He more than relieved me of the duty of speaking; for he did it better than I could have done. The Judge has, however, so completely shown the unreasonableness and folly of my difficulty, that it has entirely vanished. I now see that the article contains the only strictly open communion sentiment; and that if our union were to open its doors promis-

cuously to all its ecclesiastical enemies, it would no longer be a home for all Christians. The majority of all Christians will always prefer a pure communion table, guarded in gospel order, rather than one to whose privileges there are no defined prerequisites. For one, I feel grateful to the Judge for his plain and lucid explanation of this oft-mooted point. My wonder is, that, after the speeches of yesterday and the day before, I was not convinced, without the speech of to-day."

Mr. Todd. "That is not so wonderful after all. The resolution, which slew our prejudices, and prepared us for the reception of truth on these matters, was not proposed and carried until yesterday, after Mr. Smedley's address. Methought I saw Satan fall from heaven, with the passage of that resolution. It broke the spell of prejudice with which a reverence for tradition had veiled thousands of minds. Nearly three months ago I took the same resolve, and the reproaches of an unclouded judgment, for past stupidity and prejudice, made me ashamed of myself. It is no wonder to me that arguments are to-day irresistibly convincing, which were, a few days ago, powerless and puerile."

Chairman. "The motion to adopt the resolution is still open for remarks. For my own part, I see no chance for the existence of a purely Christian denomination outside of this union; and we could not wish to commune with one anti-christian in its principles or membership. That people will not join us, when they understand us, will prove them anti-christian, and we should not desire their communion. I suppose I shall be called a bigot, by such as under

stand, but do not mean to join us. But much as it may wound my feelings now to hear it, it will do me no harm, when I come to die. I am not my own, but am bought with a price. But I am digressing. Will any others speak on this article? The question being called for, all who favor its adoption will vote. It seems unanimous; but if any oppose it such will please vote. It is unanimous, and article fourth is adopted. We will now consider the fifth article of the covenant. It secures to each church-member an equality of power and privilege in the temporal government of the church—that all have a voice in the reception and expulsion of members, in the election of officers, of pastors, and in everything else not clearly regulated by the Scriptures. In other words, this article proposes to make the church congregational and republican, which is strictly according to the New Testament pattern. What will you do with it? Its adoption being moved and seconded, discussion is now in order.”

Mr. Seely. “It is with no little embarrassment that I call attention to a few remarks. My youth should plead the excuse of my silence to the last, but for the deep interest I feel in the adoption of that article. Born and reared under the most absolute religious despotism known on earth, not excepting even Catholicity itself, I have learned the value of religious liberty. With us the dictum of the clergy is law in everything. We can consult in the employment of our preacher, neither our own taste, nor that of our community, nor our pecuniary strength. He is sent to us by the Conference, and whether we like him or not, we have to hear and sustain him;

and when Conference says the word, if our hearts and eyes follow him with sorrow and tears, we have to give him up. When he comes, it is with him to receive or reject members. He, too, has the sole power of expulsion. Our quarterly dues we have to pay, and though we create a fund of a million of dollars, we have no voice in its appropriation. All our laymen and stationed preachers are excluded from a participation in any thing connected with the character of our denomination. The terms of membership and expulsion have been changed again and again; and we have no recourse but to leave Methodism. The New Testament clearly makes it the right and duty of every member of the church to vote in all its transactions. I feel enthusiastic for the adoption of this article."

Mr. Mullens. "I am glad Brother Seely has spoken. He has said what I wanted to say, only better than I could have done it. I hope there are four thousand Christians here to join our union, when it is organized. Methodism could not take them in under six months. The New Testament church would take them in the same day of their conversion. But there's plenty here with more sense than me, and I'll stop."

Chairman. "The question on the adoption of article fifth being called for, all who favor it will vote. The crowd is so great, we must request those who oppose it to rise, or forever, in future, hold your peace. None arise, and I declare the article unanimously adopted. Our sixth and last article in the covenant reported, is that the Bible alone shall be our man of counsel in all matters of doctrine, dis

cipline, and practice. Its adoption is moved and seconded. Its discussion is in order."

After a long silence, the question was put, and the article adopted without opposition. When it was declared adopted, Mr. Todd, although in disorder, arose and said: "While I can not oppose such an article as that, yet, impelled, it may be, by the force of education, I fear that without some creed or confession of faith, we shall not have among us the harmony of sentiment in religion, we could desire. At all events the subject is new, and I should like to hear something from one who has maturely considered the propriety of the article. I do not think a creed necessarily schismatic, unless it has schismatic tenets in it. I should fear that a want of definite limits to our preachers would ultimate in impurity of pulpit exhibitions, and this glorious union might thus be incumbered with needless prejudices and suspicions. I move that the Convention permit and invite Judge Rolan to make a few remarks on these points. It may yet be deemed necessary to reconsider the adoption of this article." The motion carried.

Judge. "I think the fears expressed will prove to be the result of education only. The Bible is a document more clear and definite in its teachings than it is possible for a human document to be. Had we a brief of Scripture doctrine, it would satisfy many of our preachers to know what it teaches, and they would never themselves deduce their views from the Bible, and consequently know but too little of their advocacy and defense. A truth deduced from God's Word by personal study, is a flame of light, be-

spangled with a bright halo of rich thoughts, which attend and reward its discovery. Found in the abstractions of a system, it is like an isolated color abstracted from the blended beauties of the rainbow. It loses its power to fire the soul of its advocate, and falls on the unmoved hearers, like snowflakes on a mountain of ice. If you want a stupid ministry, give them a skeleton of what they are to preach. Give them their positions, and fancy and speculation instead of revelation, will be their sources of proof, till all their emotions are frozen, and infidelity renders both themselves and their parishioners distrustful of almost every truth in the Bible. God's truth is the diet of the soul. He hath mixed its elements in wholesome proportions. There is no danger that a converted man will be led into heresy by the Bible, and if we put an unconverted man into the pulpit, no human creed can constrain him to preach pure doctrine. A vitiated taste will find and feast on its own aliment. A minister more ambitious of baptizing numbers than of sound conversions, will preach Campbellism. Our best ways to guard the pulpit are to put into it men of sound hearts, and to make the church-members competent judges of truth. They can then detect and depose heretics. But they become poor judges by reading abstracts of truth. An abstract is useful chiefly to him who forms it.

"Suppose we make for our church an abstract of Bible principles, what can we put into it? Let Mr. Todd suggest any sentiment he would have it set forth, and I will demonstrate, in a moment, the impossibility of making it a term of our organiza-

tion. '*The necessity of regeneration.*' That is in the Covenant. I will now show you how easily that can be made a term of our union, while many other truths equally glorious can not. If any doubt the necessity of regeneration, please rise. Not one. Now name some tenet not in our covenant. '*The final perseverance of all believers.*' Very well. If any deem it possible for true believers in Christ, or regenerate persons finally to come short of heaven, you will please rise. Perhaps two thousand rise, mostly young converts. Now could they conscientiously join a church which requires them to profess their belief of that doctrine? Never. Our last article sends them to the Bible to *form* their belief. They all, by-and-by become established in that and all other Bible tenets, if, without previous bias, they carefully study their Bibles. I'll stop, if no one moves a reconsideration of article sixth. I would not say one superfluous word." Silence, unbroken silence, proclaimed the satisfaction universal in the crowd.

CHAPTER XIV.—*Fruits gathered.*

THE difficulties to the union of God's people were now removed. It was the next object to devise a way for the baptism of those who were ready to be organized into a church. This was attended with no difficulty, since there were in the Convention two ordained ministers of Gospel churches, Mr. Smedley and Mr. Lockett. These ministers, on requesting all the United Baptists in the crowd to come forward and enroll their names as a council to aid in organizing the church, found no less than seventy-three. The council being organized the Covenant of the proposed church was read to them. They pronounced it harmonious with their respective covenants, and agreed to give to all who adopted it the hand of fellowship so soon as they were baptized. Judge Rolan then offered himself, saying: "I have long desired to obey my Savior, in baptism, and in all the duties of a church member. Christ is my only Savior, and it is my most cherished purpose to be his servant." At this a flood of grateful tears poured involuntarily down his joyous cheeks, and the crowd in sympathy rejoiced and wept.

Then came Mr. Sellers and his wife, Mr. Mullens and his wife, Mr. Todd and his wife, Mr. Seely, Mr. Theus and his wife, and many others. After a brief examination by the council, they were all recognized as Bible subjects for baptism, except Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Theus, who declared their reason for offering

themselves to the union that they wished to be in church relations with their husbands. The council unanimously pronounced it a rejection of Christ to join what we do not consider his church merely because we prefer to follow men—that if one could be willing to live in any other organization called a church, he was not sufficiently decided to follow Christ, at all hazards, to be received by that union. After examination of near forty candidates, the ministers agreed to baptize for an hour each the next morning, beginning at 8 o'clock. Voted to resume the examination of candidates at night in the Presbyterian and Reform churches, while Judge Rolou should preach at the Methodist house.

Before adjourning the convention, the reader should look over yonder at Dr. Robinson. He seems restlessly awaiting a suitable opportunity to convince the vast assembly of his enunciated proposition, "That it is folly to hope for the reconciliation and union of God's people"—that our Savior's prayer to that end was too silly for him to manifest a purpose harmonious with its spirit; that in his esteem it were better far that they waste their strength in the fierce antagonisms of which schism is the fruitful parent. He has sat there all this while, as if most earnestly attempting, but in vain, to abstract his attention from the unpleasing scenes which surround him. I pity, from my soul, the great man who is a slave to public opinion. He is now convinced that Christ was right and reasonable in the prayer, that his people should all be one; but if he does his duty and joins the union he fears that he shall not be able to convince his church

he is right, and then he must lose the smiles of those he loves. If an historian might be pardoned for stopping to moralize, I would preach a short sermon on the text, "The leaders cause my people to err." I would first note the endearing and confidential attachment which binds together the faithful pastor and his people; their readiness to receive from his lips both his statement of facts and his deductions from the same; the indifferency with which they search into truth beyond the depth and custom of his teachings; the confidence with which they expect him to tell them all the dangers in doctrine and practice to which they are liable; his supposed freedom from all motives to mislead; the love he evinces in all his ministrations, both public and private; his melting supplications for their spiritual good in temporal prosperity; his sympathy and attention in adversity; his tears mingled with theirs in affliction; his condolence in the sad gloom of bereavement; his devotion to the cause they all love. These relations, when properly sustained, generate and foster an influence irresistible for good or evil. The people can not be easily persuaded that what their pastor teaches them is erroneous. They trust both his knowledge and his intentions.

Such and so dear and powerful are the influences consequent on these heaven-appointed relations. And so let them be! Palsied be the tongue that would, by the utterance of suspicion, enfeeble the ties with which piety and duty bind together the souls of pastors and their people! Still more dread be the woe to that spiritual guide who willfully allows, or wickedly desires and labors to per-

petuate the ignorance of his people in whatever may concern their usefulness and happiness!

Again, I would advert to the sparsity of independent investigation and thought which private Christians in general have opportunity to give to profound subjects of controversy. They have neither time nor the information to detect the errors which divide Christians into parties. Taught to consider the peculiar views of all opposing parties as the result of prejudice, they fear, even when convinced, to adopt what seems to them to be truth. A few scoffs at their conclusions, when they come from their pastor, will discourage most of them from further investigations. Had Dr. Robinson gone into the union under the conviction of duty, which was all the time warring against his pride of position, he would, on his return to his brethren, have given the reasons of his conduct in an affectionate and earnest manner, and in all probability every one of them would have seen the propriety of his conduct and would have joined him in it. His members are tired any how of having to refer inquirers to the superior learning of Dr. Robinson to show what sort of reasoning will justify the sprinkling of adults or of infants. They would rather by far have such church tenets as they could justify by a mere quotation of the Scriptures, and such only would they have if not influenced by their leader to believe the truth of God not intended to mean what it does mean. Yes, the ministers cause God's people to err. But for the weight of human names and human influence they would see eye to eye in the interpretation of their duty from the Bible, and instead of

destroying, would build up each other. They would harmoniously bend their energies to the same great work.

Then, too, the suspicion of seductive influence, sought in the efforts of others than their pastors, to show them their errors of faith or polity, makes them afraid to regard seriously even the truth itself, because they fear it may not be truth. Thousands may read this little book, and tremble all the time under a consciousness of duty to leave a schismatic communion and join the church of Christ; but, alas! the question, "What will my pastor think of me?" is asked and answered by a few scornful sneers, or an affectation of argument to show such a course to be sinful. Then is grieved the Holy Spirit of God in the neglect of his gentle wooings to the path of duty.

Perhaps some editor, influenced by jealousy for his endangered craft, will caution his readers against it, as highly calculated to mislead. In all these ways are the credulity and the confidence of church-members often abused by their guides in religion. Hence it is needful and obligatory, that we remember that God only is to be our Judge. Thus shall we make his Word, as interpreted by our own judgment, our final rule in all matters pertaining to the conscience.

If every minister would realize his duty and responsibility, how soon would schism be removed and the world converted! But, alas! great numbers thank their God that there are so many sects, so that all who want some religion can be gratified by the presence of one suited to his taste. But the inci-

dents of my story and the wearied patience of the reader forbid me to linger.

With the pleasing task of hearing the experiences of young converts, God's people never grow weary. It was ten o'clock at night when these exercises were suspended at the churches. About three hundred members were received at the two places. They were all baptized the next morning. At 11 o'clock they met at the Presbyterian church with Mr. Lockett, and after receiving the hand of fellowship from the council, they elected their deacons, and made arrangements to ordain them and also to the ministry, Judge Rolan, Messrs. Sellers, Hall, and Seely, who had expressed their desire to become ministers of the Gospel. Mr. Smedley preached at the stand. In view of the large number to be baptized, it was resolved to ordain the candidates immediately after morning services at the stand. This was done by prayer and imposition of hands by Messrs. Smedley and Lockett. At night again they continued to receive members, at all the houses of worship. They requested that those living at a distance and wishing to be baptized before necessity should require them to leave the Convention, would come forward first. The examinations were as brief as they could be to be satisfactory. Their effect upon the people was like enchantment. Numbers, before deemed Gospel-hardened, were by the simple narration of God's dealings with young converts in their return to him, made to tremble and weep like infancy. One thing was remarkable—only a few of the converts could tell what particular circumstance first awakened them to serious reflection. Most of

them ascribed it to the general solemnity felt through the community and assembly, and said they had been haunted by an indefinable and irresistible sense of melancholy wretchedness, and had been driven to prayer as the only way of venting their deep agony.

The people continued to meet and to baptize every day for a week. The crowds did not seem to grow less. There was but little preaching save that of young converts, who told with joy what the Lord had done for them. Like the converts on the day of Pentecost, they went to their homes bearing the joyful news, and many in every community were awakened, and seeming to think the preachers of the Convention, so signally blessed, were God's favorites, they were sending after them from every region, the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." Messrs. Rolan, Sellers, Seely, and Hall at once became great revivalists. The numbers of the church in L—— were swelled by accessions from the world, and of the most pious and exemplary of other denominations. These ministers, too, were soon joined by numbers of the best ministers in all the sects. God was with them. He confirmed their doctrine by the unrivaled success with which he blessed their labors.

Three years have rolled by. A plain and commodious house of worship, which generally, on the Sabbath, seats between twelve hundred and fifteen hundred hearers, now pleads to the remembrance of that convention, whose memorable proceedings have been imperfectly sketched in these hurried notes. Mr. Sellers is the earnest man of God who occupies

it. How reformed in the spirit and matter of his preaching! We have seen him as the advocate of a system which he durst not commend more warmly than to contend that *it would do*. Cramped in all his efforts to promote its prosperity by the fear that some one would suspect or accuse him of believing it right, his labors were soulless and pointless. Is it injustice to say he did not think his former church *right* even while its minister? No; he even then admitted it was not *the* church. While there may be ten thousand wrongs, there is only one right. He could not claim that his church, among all the hundreds that are self-styled churches, was the only one that was right. No; he spurned indignantly the suspicion that he thought so. His masterly talents were half exhausted in the effort to conceal its deformities. The midnight lamp, in the sun's absence, might as soon flood the earth with light, as his cold and studied compositions, called sermons, reform the world. He came forth from his study, Sabbath after Sabbath, like a giant to meet an army, but it was an army of critics. The chilling consciousness that his cause was partly right and partly wrong, and so unimportant that he did not specially care which, led its advocate to forget the awful solemnity of his mission, and to convert the pulpit into an arena to exhibit the prowess of his own mind. External attractives were then required to call out and entertain the crowd. An intellectual production that might create dread in a college of aspirants for the meed of greatness, was the subject of eulogy by the dispersing congregation. The minister's visits were rather for the purpose of hearing

how his productions were received, than of finding out those whose minds had been awakened and were inquiring for the way of life.

To this inefficiency in Mr. Sellers, more than one thing conspired. His church was a candidate for popular favor, with no higher claim to superiority over its competitors, than its adaptation to a more refined taste. This point being contested, its proofs were the intelligence of its ministers, the splendor of its edifices for public worship, the refinement and style of its members, and the decency and order of its worship and ordinances. We are compelled to be careful of those features, whether of mind, body, or profession, in which are based our claims for distinction. With such objects prominent, the minister's heart, with those of his church, freezes. Like mountains of ice between the sun and the vale, they tower up between the soul and the sun of righteousness.

In the prosecution of these claims, no dread of fierce antagonism, or personal hatred and persecution, rouses the soul to a deep sense of dependence on God. It is when we claim to be right, and fearlessly admit the implied consequent, that all opposition is wrong and infinitely dangerous, that we wake the lion of persecution, and exposing ourselves to the severe animadversions of our enemies, we are driven to an inexpressible sense of our weakness and need of Bible knowledge, burning piety, and divine aid. How did it nerve the soul of Luther! The darkness of spiritual death had pillared itself far and wide upon temples and cathedrals consecrated to a corrupted and secularized church,

guarded and courted by a more corrupt horde of priests, and had pavilioned itself beneath the impenetrable vail of depravity, universally blinding the souls of men to the knowledge of God, and to their own immortal interests. He, as a bright comet amid the gloom of a starless night, feeling that unless this cloud was soon dispelled, the world was lost, forever lost, and that he only was commissioned in the strength of God to do it, sprang into the midst of this darkness, rendered hoary by ages, and honorable by the servile adorations of the millions its own gloom had blinded, and grasping, as with a giant's arm, its massive pillars, he led bewildered and duped thousands to the knowledge of Jesus, and emancipated the Bible, long imprisoned from benighted mortals by popes and prelates. He stands before the Diet of Worms, like Jesus before the bar of Pilate. The fear of death can not seal those lips inspired with the truth of salvation, nor daunt that heart which, he believes, beats and prays alone for a lost world. Like Samson beneath the temple of the Philistines, he resolves, if fall he must, his fall shall, if possible, make way for the freedom of God's imprisoned truth, and for the enlightenment of enslaved and benighted humanity. Thus mighty do we become in the consciousness of right and of duty to oppose all who obstruct the way of our duty.

It is now thus with Mr. Sellers. From the birth of his cause in L——, it had been met by the most immeasurable hatred and the most relentless opposition and persecution. Despairing of self-support and self-sufficiency, he has been driven the nearer to Christ. The vine, assailed by frequent and furi-

ous storms, takes the stronger hold of the tree on which it leans for support. He is now strong in the confidence of God, and bold in the consciousness of truth. He dares to assail all error and vice, whether in human organizations, honored customs, or in individuals high or low in the esteem of men. The burning ardor of soul in which he declares truth from the pulpit or in the private circle, drives it home to the heart. The savor of his ministerial influence displays itself in the elevated character of his members, both in their individual and social capacities. He has now lost the fear of offending men. He would rather die a martyr for the truth than admit to be churches of Christ those sects which wickedly cling to tradition, even to the rejection of God's commands. He faithfully warns them against such sin. He does not scruple to call it sin; aye, even high-handed sin.

An old gray-headed man of fourscore years, the patriarch of more than thirty descendants, whom Providence had blessed in early life, by the honest acquisition of an immense fortune, has now lost all care but for the perpetuity of his "first love," the sect of episcopacy. His family had set fashions for the community. When all his church, but himself and the few, whom a dread of disinheritance and a faithful and obsequious regard to his posthumous favor, held within the compass of his smiles, had joined the union, he and they were still true to their sect. Money is nothing when principle is involved. He finds a graduated youth whom salary can pay to preach to empty benches—one whom listeners could not be paid to hear—and engages him to occupy

twice per month the church of his sect. His granddaughters have many admirers, who go with, or after them to their church. From thirty to fifty are found in attendance. The young clergyman talks half an hour to the little flock, as if he had been told to do so, but could not himself discern the need of so doing. He goes sometimes and hears Mr. Sellers press the necessity of repentance, faith, submission to God's law and ordinances in all things, while he weeps over the sins of the wicked, and of schismatics. He goes away offended, and he and his brethren say as many hard things of Mr. Sellers as they possibly can. Gladly would they effect the destruction of the cause he pleads, even if they might do it in no other way than by crushing the fair standing of its advocate. Their efforts to this end are more habitual and earnest than their prayers to God for the success of his cause and for the display of his own glory. This the community have learned, and except such as feel a need of the patriarch's smiles, frown on such efforts.

Does the reader inquire what became of Mr. Sawyer, the Methodist minister; who had reasoned so ably to convince Mr. Mullens "that sincerity is as good as truth?" He had made up his mind to join the union, and had commenced telling it as news to cheer its friends. He had become foremost in his labors to aid Mr. Smedley in the meeting. But a few friends had whispered to him that he would not be able to get into the union, and from that time he maintained the attitude of an inquirer, seemed to have some doubts as to the propriety of joining. He sat near Dr. Robinson, and would try to favor both

parties. He continued, till the close of the year; to rally those of his brethren, who would still come to hear him, and then left L——, followed by very few inquiries, or tears. He may have found some other place where it would pay to preach Methodism.

The Methodist Society in L—— had lost the respectable rank of a religious body. The circuit rider, sometimes a good man, but generally such, both for piety and talent, as conference could afford to spare for a region so little congenial to the growth of Methodism, was still instructed to visit that point. All who gave evidence of real piety among the Methodists, had, as they learned its principles, joined the union. The Presbyterian and Reformed churches had wholly ceased to regard themselves as organized bodies. The union in L——, after granting over two thousand letters of dismission to members living at a distance, numbered a fraction under nine hundred of the white race, and nearly double that number of the colored population. The latter had bought the Reform meeting-house, and were now paying Mr. Seely one thousand dollars per year to sustain him as their regular pastor. Both the white and the colored churches were doing well. They received members nearly every week.

The union in L—— paid fifteen hundred dollars per year to Judge Rolan to travel and spread the principles of the union, but he passed the whole of his salary into the hands of the Indian Mission, preferring to support himself out of his large estate. Great success crowned his efforts wherever he went. Mr. Hall had accompanied him until persuaded by the church in the city of H—— to become their pastor.

CHAPTER XV.—*Prediction.*

THE members of the union are free to advocate right, and to oppose wrong, wherever found. It was about this period that the following letter and answer were written :

“REV. ALFRED ROLAN,—*Dear Bro.:*—Having heard with great pleasure of the basis on which you are attempting to unite the religious world, and of your unparalleled success in that and other efforts to do good, I beg to be excused for the freedom of addressing you while personally unacquainted with you. I am a warm advocate of an object which I know you will feel disposed to favor. The plan would just fall into the catholicity of your views. I am a member of the American Bible Society. We are united, you know, in the purpose to publish and circulate the Bible among all classes and sects without note or comment. Having just adopted the report of our committee recommending the removal of twenty-four thousand errors from King James' version of the Bible, and having raised a learned committee from the several denominations, and instructed them to collate all the most approved English versions, and to make every correction in the propriety of which all can agree, it is needless to suggest to you, that we shall need an increase of funds to carry on the work. From the reputation you have for success in rallying the different denominations of Christians, I am authorized by the Society to offer you fifteen hundred dollars per year to take, in connection with your present calling, an

agency for our Society to raise money in the South. The removal of the many, many errors in translation from the Bible, which impair its beauty and obscure its teachings, can not fail, I think, to commend itself to every catholic mind. If you approve the proposition, you will please answer without unnecessary delay. Yours in hope of a more intimate acquaintance,

J. S. MOORE.

"New York."

To which the following reply will show the Judge's disposition toward an effort to free our version from its numerous imperfections :

"REV. J. S. MOORE,—*Dear Bro.*:—Your complimentary note was in the office when I returned to L—, several days ago. I have had its contents under as serious and prayerful consideration as the migratory nature and pressing duties of my agency would allow. The enterprise of removing twenty-four thousand errors from our translation of the Bible, I think, can not fail to enlist the feelings of all who value the Bible. I had read the proceedings of your Society in reference to this point, and heartily and gratefully do I accept the compliment of your invitation to take the agency, but several difficulties, to me insuperable, forbid my acceptance of the agency itself. I will give these in detail, lest my decline be construed into a want of sympathy with the great enterprise itself:

"1. The two agencies can not be successfully prosecuted by the same agent, and I could not be willing to incur the one I have, even by taking a wife. Its importance commends itself to me, and

engrosses all my energies and all my labors. I believe it more important, and much more imperious in its demand of immediate prosecution, than even the object you propose. I could not, therefore, think of undertaking any thing else, even if I were capable of the duties your agency would impose.

"2. I am no scholar, and am, therefore, unwilling to provoke the prejudice which would have to be met by one who challenges, before the public, the accuracy of our version. The agent in this case should be one who can refer to the originals to show the value of his criticisms. This I could not do.

"3. I am wholly skeptical as to the practicability of your plan. A chief cause for the divisions among Christians is the want of an acknowledged version of the Bible. The translation of a few mooted phrases is the great bone of contention. These some denominations do, and others do not, want altered. You can not make principles bend; and can not work in, and render subservient to the enterprise a heterogeneous knot of fiercely antagonizing principles. To illustrate the ground of my fears. While every denominational interest and preference must be met and subserved by the work, we will suppose your translators to come to Ac. xii: 4, where we find the word *Easter*, the name of a heathen deity. I am told that this word should be *Passover*; and yet if it were changed, there would be in the Bible no more authority for the feast of Easter among the Catholics and Episcopalians, than there is now for infant baptism. You surely do not believe they would consent to the change. But for wearying your patience with citations and comments, I could show

you many places in which all would not concur in the needed change. To be brief; I could not conscientiously ask the people to raise \$200,000 or \$300,000 to alter our version, when our highest hope would be to leave it unimproved in almost, if not every, essential feature. I see no way to get our version faithfully corrected but to put it into the hands of a denomination thoroughly scriptural in all its features; or if we select translators from different sects, to have them most solemnly pledged to be faithful to the originals, even though their respective sects should fall to the ground. In either of these ways, provided the translators secured should be Christian scholars, I think we might rely on their work. I belong to a denomination whose members can have, as you may see by examining our covenant, no possible motive to wish the Scriptures to teach, or not to teach, any particular sentiment. All our peculiar views are sanctioned by all evangelical denominations, and acknowledged scriptural. Our main feature is, that all our members should study the Bible as much as they can, and enjoy their private views of its meaning. They will, therefore, feel grateful for all the aid rendered by faithful translators. I can see no good likely to come of your effort in revision, beyond the elegance of expression which your heterogeneous committee might concur in the desire to put upon the Bible; and deeming that unworthy the cost of bestowing it, I respectfully decline the agency, and predict the failure of the enterprise. With all the deference due to the eminent learning, exemplary piety, matured experience and practical wisdom which

I may almost say it is the peculiar privilege of your Society to boast, I think the future will develop the accuracy of my prediction, that sometime during the execution of your plan, you will discover its difficulties. Indeed, in the exercise of that charity, which rejoiceth not in evil, but in the truth, I apprehend that when you may have spent thousands of dollars, and still more precious energies, in the enterprise, you will be compelled by a retrograde movement to lose the whole, and thus forever destroy the confidence of the public, either in your wisdom or in the integrity of your designs. In this way you may seriously cripple the powers for good of a Society, which, in the absence of a better one, is now infinitely necessary to the cause of God, in printing and distributing a version sufficiently accurate to make its readers wise unto salvation. Thus much I say in justice, rather than in praise, to our common version. Being a close student of it, I acknowledge, and have felt its deficiencies. By the aid of scholars, I have learned that all the contradictions and inelegancies of the style which mar its influence with skeptics, and its attractions for men of cultivated taste, vanish immediately when the originals are consulted. In it, I have learned, is the shadowy foundation of Universalism, if, indeed, it has not its only foundation in the depravity that loves such a doctrine. Hence, too, are denied the mightiest supports of Arianism and Unitarianism. Against the removal of these and such errors of translation, it were rebellion against both the Bible and the God of the Bible to object. I repeat, therefore, that it is not your object, but your *plan*, of whose propriety I

entertain doubts. It shall, however, be my prayer that the success of your great undertaking may, instead of realizing my prediction, develop its erroneousness. In the warmest sympathy for your object itself, and the most cheerful readiness to aid its accomplishment, on some practical plan, when devised and explained,

"I am yours, etc.,

ALFRED ROLAN.

"Baton Rouge, La."

Four years rolled by after the above was written, and we find the Judge still prosecuting the work of his religious life. Though past the age of sixty, he still bids fair for a long and useful period of toil. For two weeks has he been surpassing the expectations which his great fame had created in the city of C——, in the South, in connection with the appointment of a visit, and a protracted stay in that place. Here had his labors been crowned with unusual success, and his preaching characterized by an unction he had never before enjoyed. On Sabbath night his sermon to the unconverted was the outpouring of a burning soul. Its reasoning and its words are all that paper and ink can report. That which gives the pulpit its great power can never be transferred to the press. It may aid the effort to convey a just impression of his sermon, if the reader will conceive of him as a man of sixty or over, who feels impressed that his career on earth is almost ended. He has come to the house of God unusually burdened. Never perhaps was a more earnest prayer poured out to God than he had just offered for the union and efficiency of his people;

for the scores then weeping between the porch and the altar; for the alarm of the incorrigible, and last, and with the most soul-subduing ardor, for himself, that he might clear his garments of their blood, and win many to the way of life. He might almost be characterized as a man of tears; for his eyes were as a full fountain. He rises weeping, and the audience weep with him. They believe his zeal unaffected and felt.

"My subject," says he, "is '*Now is the accepted time.*' Dear dying ones, let me beg that you listen this evening as to the voice of God. Never before felt I so sensibly the awful responsibility of standing as a mouthpiece for God. Forget, O forget, that an erring mortal brings this evening's message. Let its solemn accents come to thy heart as the voice of Jesus, and may the slumbering soul, like dead Lazarus, hear and obey! Thou art asleep to a sense of thy danger. Business or pleasure has made thee forget God. Once thy thoughts of him, and of thy state as a sinner, troubled thy soul. But thou art now careless. Alarm hath seized thee of late; but relief, perhaps, instead of profit is what a sore conscience drives thee to seek in wicked diversions. Open thine eyes to the danger of a false peace. Awake, and 'prepare to meet thy God!' Oft have you before been pressed to this duty. God gives you another invitation and opportunity. If you now heed his voice the past is forgiven; if not, the delay of this moment sanctions all the rebellion of the past, and brings on you the whole curse due to a sinful life. Be then entreated to free your mind from interruptions, and note well the reasons here

presented to urge your immediate repentance. Beware that you say not, I am too much engaged now. Felix once said, 'Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.' As his adjournment of the divine call proved final, so may yours, if you do not now take the needed time and make the needed effort to ponder well the reasons now to be given. He neglected and was lost. He is not said to have spurned or ridiculed the Apostle; he respectfully, perhaps reverently, *delayed* compliance with his solemn message. 'How shall we escape if we *neglect* so great salvation?' Thou art arrested by a curse; 'he that believeth not is condemned already.' 'He that believeth on Jesus Christ is born of God.' Thou art a Christian or a child of wrath. 'Escape' is what thou needest. The curse holds thee now and indifferency will seal thy doom. 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be cursed when the Lord comes.' Then sinner be in haste.

"1. *Let the desire of happiness constrain you.* By delay to repent and believe the Gospel, you, by choice, prolong a state of wretchedness which, by submission to Christ would immediately be removed. A cheerful smile may bid men think you happy; but 'the wicked are like the troubled sea. There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.' Sadness rends your bosom, as oft as solitude drives you to the consciousness of your state before God. 'I am a sinner,' must thou say. By ten thousand crimes, am I God's enemy. I have no claim to his indulgence. A few years at most and I shall meet him, my angry Judge. What shall I do but perish 'from the

way when his wrath is kindled but a little.' I may this hour be justly called to my account, and only 'a fearful expectation of vengeance and fiery indignation' awaits me. One after another dies around me; and some very suddenly and awfully. Though spared long, I, like the cursed fig tree, bear no fruit to the glory of God. I fear I shall be lost. Yes, sinner, conscience thus taunts thee as oft as thy reluctant ears will hear her voice of reproach. Thy most solid pleasures effervesce into nothing under the ills of life. The death-rattle, though in a stranger's throat, or the sight of a coffin, or a corpse, will scatter them like affrighted birds, and melancholy, like a giant, will seize thee, unless thou art hardened indeed. Spells of gloom, inconsolable, except in stultifying thy sensibilities by flight to dangerous diversions, oft mock thy joys. The whirlwind of passion may drown the voice of conscience for a while, but not always; and knowing this, thou canst but tremble when thou has done the deed.

"Compelled to seek all your happiness in objects foreign to yourself and the state of your soul before God, you can not endure reflection. In retirement, where Christians find their richest joys, you find gloom. The diversions in which you take refuge from the gloom of reflection, are perishing with their using. Once tried, they lose part of their charms. The aged have no pleasure in them. With death will cease all your communications with these resources; but conscience, which you most of all things dread and would destroy, will never die. Reflection, memory, and apprehension will forever triumph in the dominion of your wretched being.

Such wretchedness you now endure with the assurance of its everlasting increase, unless you become a Christian. Then should you have peace. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' 'By faith we have access into the grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Numbers profess this peace but feel it not. They have sought it in vain by penance, or baptism, or some other work, and not by faith. Found by faith in Christ, it is an ineffable prize. No charms can bribe one to renounce it. A struggle is to be made ere it is gained. 'Strive (Greek, Agonize,) to enter in at the difficult gate.' The deepest agony of soul must be felt. But 'blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' And then what joy. 'It is unutterable and full of glory.' With its deep fountains the stranger intermeddleth not. It is felt, but not conceived nor expressed. 'O taste and see that the Lord is good!' 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.' Bible piety, the only passport to heaven*, is indeed a priceless jewel.

"Thousands who labor to maintain the form of godliness, never feel its richness and power. To them religion is a burden now, and will prove an aggravation of their final woe. 'The hope of the hypocrite shall perish.' But do thou, sinner, seek the power, and thou shalt find its joys now, and its rewards in eternity. Thy soul shall rest, though storms rage around thee. Thou shalt feel what thou canst not now, 'that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called

according to his purpose;' that though 'clouds and darkness are round about him, his throne is based in righteousness and judgment.' Thou shalt feel thy soul anchored to the throne of God.' He will reveal himself to thee as not to the world.' 'The hidden manna' of a Savior's love shall be the joyous food of thy soul; and in all the ills and sorrows of life, light shall cheer thy heart. A rich cluster of sparkling promises shall center themselves in a halo of light over thy grave, dispelling thence the gathering gloom of death. O let the voice of wisdom persuade thee that 'her ways are ways of pleasantness; and all her paths peace. But God is angry with the wicked every day. Now sinner, to live in sin is to choose a prolongation of misery and self denial of real happiness.

"But perhaps you still doubt the verity of the argument; 'The wicked roll sin as a sweet morsel under the tongue.' For you, whose soul is 'enmity against God,' it is hard to believe. Let me ask, Whose testimony, of all your acquaintances, would you soonest credit? Would you not rather trust the eminently pious? They tell you with one voice how empty are all sinful pleasures, and how unworthy to be compared with the joys and hopes of the Christian. Let them answer in prosperity or adversity, in health or under the wasting hand of disease, in the hope of long life, or amid the mists of the yawning tomb, their answer is still the same. As they descend to the grave, when most they need support, their hopes and joys are the brightest; their spirits the most triumphant. It is otherwise with the dying wicked. 'They are driven away in

their wickedness.' Oh, to read the commentary on this text, which is sometimes written in the agonized features, or uttered in the fierce shrieks of an expiring lost one! It has perhaps been the sad lot of many here to witness such a warning. Christians never curse the folly of their choice when death comes. O, sinner! for your own present peace and happiness, if there were no greater reason, turn to the Lord!

"2. *You may die in delay.* No mercy-seat is accessible to the departed. As death arrests you, so the judgment and eternity will find you. 'There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave whither thou goest.' A sinner dead is a sinner forever lost. No prayers can bring a drop of water to cool the rich man's burning tongue. Life is the only time to prepare for heaven. Death is the end of God's patience with the wicked; and that event, so fraught with awful moment, may be just at hand. Its herald sometimes proclaims it near, and gives warning to be ready; but often it smites its victim unawares. While thou art hearing this appeal, he may stand, unsuspected, with his finger upon the fatal arrow, and the arrow upon the string, and may in one moment seal that ruin thou now deemest so remote as not to dread its hazard.

"'That, sir, is an old argument,' said a devotee to worldliness, some time since, to an earnest friend, who pressed him to repent. But less than one month proved it, in his case, a very wise argument, urged in vain. For he had died suddenly in all the horrors of impenitency. It is with you, too, an old argument. Repeated neglect has perhaps destroyed

its power to move you ; yet one hour may show the folly of disregarding it. While life is so uncertain, how unwise to allow, designedly, so great a risk ! You would not willingly leave exposed for a single night your purse, where a thief might discover and steal it. You would not leave exposed your field containing the year's earnings, merely because the neighbors' cattle *might not come* ; nor your store, because the thief *might not* ; that they *might come* would induce you to secure your effects with all diligence. But the soul, which has no representative of its value but in the Redeemer's sufferings and intercessions, you disregard in the most imminent exposure. Suspended over the gulf of fiery billows by the meager tenure of an uncertain moment, its danger bids you hasten to secure its deliverance. And do you ridicule, or even ignore that warning ? Once lost in hell, a universe of the most precious diamonds could not purchase its restoration.

“And why delay, if you hope ever to repent ? Life is none too long for the immense work to be done. Your passions and carnal appetencies, pampered and matured in the indulgence of forbidden pleasures for years, are to be reduced by self-denial, that through all the frailties of your depraved nature, may shine forth the image of Jesus. How hard would this be now ! and yet every day's neglect will render it more so. You have indeed no time to waste. All is needed to prepare to die. The wanderings of an unsteady soul are to be chastened by communion with God, and by meditation in his law. For all this, time is so short and uncertain, only a moment at once being granted to all the millions on

earth, as if God would thus impress the infinite value of a single moment; and yet you permit these moments to come one after another, as God's warnings to your soul, and to depart to the bar of judgment, only as witnesses, freighted with the record of your rebellious deeds and neglect of the gospel. Be up! O sleeper! If ever thou repent, thou art now drifting down the stream, whose fearful rapids are to be overcome in thy return to God. You are indeed to be pitied. Not so much so is the man who in his pleasuring craft, has fallen asleep, and is drifting toward the brink of Niagara's down-rushing cataract; more to be pitied than the huntsman, who loiters amid the forests while gathers the hurricane that shall sweep them to the ground. The storm of wrath gathers. The thunders of the enraged Law would alarm thee, but that thou sleepest in the dream of safety. Better that the man-slayer linger in his flight to the city of refuge, while the avenger of blood pursues! O sinner! take refuge in Christ! Blinded, thou art sporting on the verge of the awful pit. Let the voice of blended vengeance and affection, pealing from Sinai and Calvary, bid thee *stop!* stop! STOP! Bethink you how one presumptuous step more may make your retreat forever impossible, or plunge you at once into ruin. God has not covenanted to sustain you in such wicked wanderings.

"3. *Delay increases your danger.* The mind can not be twice affected alike by the same event. Novelty hath its power; but the slightest familiarity destroys it. The gospel is the only power of God unto salvation. Thou hast heard that, and it moved

thee to tears. Had it been of man, it had moved thee no more. Oft has it moved thee since; even yet, perhaps it moves thy soul; but decide thou if it moves thee not less and less perceptibly. How unmoved thine impulses by the ardor of a weeping minister now! The rich tones of the gospel thou hearest as an accustomed cymbal. Thy soul is so stupefied, that the accents of a mother's voice, long hushed in death, though they once trembled with emotion while uttering thy name in prayer, have now almost perished from thy memory. The heart is hardened. The sermons which to many of thine associates have proved 'a savor of life,' have to thee proved 'a savor of death.' Like Pharaoh, thy very opportunities have steeled thy soul. The love of sin increases. Though you may not deem it less dangerous—which however you are sure to do—the power of evil association and habit is nevertheless stronger now than formerly; and it grows stronger daily. The gust for pleasure, the pride of position with wicked associates, and the very remembrance of not having been smitten down, all conspire to enchain thee in thy spell of apathy. Oh, what agony of effort could even now break that spell!

"But why waste words to note the little ills which endanger your salvation—if it be not blasphemy to call any of them 'little'—while the soul and center of them all are unnoticed! The WILL, the monarch of all the intellectual and moral faculties; which smothers the conscience and wars against the judgment, grows daily more and more perverse. 'I can repent whenever I will,' did you say? It is granted; but the will is your absolute master in all responsi-

ble decisions and actions, and it is a stranger to fear. Your judgment or your conscience may be alarmed; but nothing in the universe is, or can be so terrible as to alarm the will; it is moved alone by motives of suasion. It is not self-controlling. It becomes by every day's neglect more rebellious against its rightful masters, the judgment and the conscience, which, instead of ruling, are now wickedly subordinated, and must so remain till conversion restores each to its proper position in the soul. To Titus, Paul has explained this in these words: 'Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.' Wicked monarchs make wicked subjects; the perverse *will* corrupts all the other faculties, and in its dominion grows stronger and stronger. If, then, with the mighty weight of motives involved in all the alarming evils, that now beset and warn you, it is impossible for you to will repentance, what reason induces the belief that future circumstances can change that will?

"Every tendency is to the contrary; each voluntary action determines the will more strongly in that direction. Action repeated tends to form habit. Habits, whether of thought or action, are second nature, and almost irresistible; confirmed, they make character. All the habits in unregeneracy are sinful, just as all the willing subjects of a vicious monarch are sinful. How many habits are so confirmed that you think not of them! they have become involuntary. To neglect prayer once alarmed you. Now you may never think of it with concern. To swear, or to hear it, once shocked you; among your own

habits is now perhaps that of profanity. Other wicked habits are doubtless forming and growing confirmed. With them is attained an induration of character very discouraging to the hope of conversion.

“A sentiment is quite common with the wicked, that habitual actions, not proceeding directly from an exercise of the will, can not be moral, and consequently can not be sinful. It is fatally erroneous. A habit can not be formed without the consent of the will; did one ever form the habit of thrusting his hand into the fire, or otherwise severely punishing himself? We habituate ourselves to what we love to do; and that one is unconscious of a habit which violates God's law, only proves his exceeding and hardened wickedness in its indulgence. Should a son requite all the kind assiduities of a tender mother, with abuse by words and blows, would the apology, that he so habitually did it as not to think of it, palliate the crime? And yet, dying sinner, with such heaven-insulting apathy do you now break the Sabbath, swear, lie, intoxicate, and revel in debauchery, while God, Bible, morals and soul are all forgotten? Is it so with you now? and do not the fearful evils of your state incline you to repent? If not, you are very near the point beyond which it is impossible to be reclaimed. Look well to thy state. Does thy soul tremble with dread? There is, then, hope of thee, unless thou linger for a moment in indecision, or having decided on the duty of repentance, postpone for a better time. Heed! and improve the slightest remaining touches of conscience as thine only hope of return to God. Cry mightily and con-

stantly unto Him, who alone can change that will. Read thy Bible. Eschew worldly cares and thoughtless companions. Go alone this night and meditate. Thy soul is ruined if thou delay. One moment, and the crisis may pass.

“Beside the growing evils of continued impenitency, forget not that now is God’s time. ‘Remember now thy Creator.’ ‘To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.’ ‘He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.’ How great the destruction of which God is the author to avenge his abused mercies! Have all thy reproofs only hardened thee? Then thou shalt ‘be suddenly destroyed.’ Some are suddenly smitten down by death; others lingering with tedious diseases, think only of recovery until they unawares drop off. Their destruction is sudden. Disease dethrones the reason of many, and they can not think nor repent. God will execute his threats on those who incur them. You can not escape, dear sinner, unless you repent. Now is the best time. ‘Come, now, and let us reason together,’ saith God. With the first awakening is an impulse to aid thy turning. This delay chills, and it is hard, indeed, to turn. But the duty is still required under the penalty of eternal death.

“4. *To postpone is cruel to your future self.* Do you expect to reach old age? You will then need every support, and freedom from every care. Wise persons provide in youth for the comfort of old age; you, if young, reverse this order, and, in the most important concern of an immortal being on earth, studiously lay up trouble for that needy period.

You have seen that delay increases the difficulty of repentance, and of a holy life. The struggle of commencing is too hard for the vigor of youth; yet you defer it, with its increasing difficulties, to the feebleness of old age. You are like the boy who floats in his little boat down a rapid stream all the morning, unwilling to stem the current by a little effort, though he knows all his energies will be required to row back in the evening. How hates he such folly, when approaching night spurs his wearied strength to pay for his morning's ease! And how will you, in old age, if you should, as you intend, turn from your follies to God, hate the cruelty of your present course! Bethink you; are you really incapable of a choice between eternal life and eternal death? Can the short-lived pleasures of this world, with all the misery inseparable, from exposure to God's wrath, be so sweet as to atone for the loss of eternal happiness? Will their remembrance in hell assuage 'the hot displeasure of the Almighty?' or the pain of eternal burnings? Oh! what reasons for an immediate choice! and can you not make it? Yes; you do choose! Much of life you have spent in pursuit of your chosen object, *eternal* misery! All the while have you been urged to reverse that choice, but hitherto you were unwilling. 'Except you repent you must perish;' and a bitter element of your perdition will be the reflection, 'I chose my portion.' Do you now, with aching heart, rue your choice, and with full soul ask, 'What must I do?' Happy art thou, with all thy sense of misery! Give God the glory of thy awakening. Betake thee to his Word, to reflection, and to prayer. Haste! for

the danger is not past. Many are powerfully awakened, and then, returning to their folly, they are lost.

"Do you resolve to go on in your sins? Dread you not the final ruin of your soul? Then, if so strong is your confidence in the integrity of your purpose to turn in old age, amid all the difficulties accumulating to prevent, that you will now persist in sin, you are, indeed, to be pitied; but waiving an argument which you have deemed worthless, and admitting it possible, or even certain, that you will do as you propose; another consideration may be blessed of God to the repentance of your choice.

"5. *Your influence ruins others.* You have mind; many are influenced by your position on religious, as well as on other subjects. Reflect that you have been influenced in your own religious position by others. Perhaps you would once have become a Christian but for personal influences that restrained you. Though pride may forbid you confess it, conscience will enforce the argument. Your influence also restrains others. You may not seek to deter others from becoming Christians; may often and quite publicly express your admiration of Christianity, and of the character it tends to form; your position itself as a neglecter, or rejector of religion, is the basis of your influence. Of many who respect you for your talents, amiability, wealth or relations, you share the confidence in a greater or less degree. Them you ought to love too well at least to injure yourself to ruin them.

"Are you a mother? What a curse for children to be reared by a prayerless mother! They think

you love them too well not to guard them against influences destructive to their souls. Your sentiments and character to a great extent they aspire to copy. The preacher or book that, by earnestly warning them, seems to censure you, they willingly reject. Pious mothers may rear wicked children; but wicked ones are almost sure to do so. Lovely babe! that smiles upon thy mother's lap, or prattles around her feet; will the guardian Heaven gave it train it for hell! No influence is more effective than a mother's. Yes! ungodly mother! behold thy daughter who sits trembling and weeping beside thee now. Shall thy cold glance freeze her emotions, and silence her resolution to forsake vanity and sin? Oh! no; take her rather by the hand and bid her flee to the Savior.

“Are you a father? Should old age witness your conversion, how will the thought embitter your religious life, that some of your offspring died impenitent while under the wing of your wicked influence! Could you ever forgive yourself? What! escort your own children to the brink of woe, and hope that after handing them over to devouring flames, you can gain the compassion of God, and a mansion in glory! Your resolve, if made, to postpone repentance till old age, implies no less; unless you claim the power to prevent their death till after your postponed conversion. Think you they would be so careless of their souls, if you were earnestly seeking the salvation of your own, and urging them with a father's concern to do likewise? In the day of judgment, they, if lost, will curse the folly and cruelty of your present delay; nay, the very confidence that

made them trust your example. O fathers! fathers! to drag to ruin your sons and daughters!

“Are you a physician? You oft visit immortals upon a bed of death. You acquire an influence awfully fearful. You have opportunities which others have not. When the hurry of business, and the chase of pleasure are shut out, by the pressure of solemn thoughts crowding the mind of your patient, he receives you as his dearest earthly friend. Do you point him to Jesus? Or by your own avowed impenitency bid him continue still in sin?

“Are you a lawyer? Prominence gives your example a fearful influence. Beware that with heightened responsibility, you are not found an aggravated defaulter before God. In your profession are many bold, scoffing infidels. Their trusting wives, and tender offspring are not unfrequently frowned or ridiculed into the reluctant neglect of piety. Such guilt, though yourself be the perpetrator, is soul-murder. I challenge thee before God, to ask them if thou hast not restrained them! Woe to you that shut up the kingdom of heaven against others! It were less cruel to stamp a pious mother's life out beneath one's feet!

“Are you a politician? Your prominence is pilared and pavilioned by the most dangerous temptations to debauchery. Beware that beholders find you a worthy pattern. Labor not less to make your calling and election sure for heaven than for earthly honors. Instructor! Man of business! Daughter of rank and fashion! whoever you are, it is fearful to exert influence, unless for good. Your very im-

penitence is a barrier to the religious life of your dependents and admirers. And your sentiments are messengers of moral death. You would be thought to have reasons for your conduct. Your excuses, being the outpourings of a depraved and infidel heart, are corrupting and blasting. 'One sinner destroyeth much good.' Dying one, is that sinner yourself? O flee to Christ!

"6. *God may reject you.* This is the most awful thought of the awakened soul: 'I have sinned so long and with so little remorse, that I scarcely deemed it sin; I have spurned God's terms so often, that I fear my day of grace has passed. And are these Scriptures to awaken and justify this dread in one who would put off repentance? 'Seek ye the Lord *while he may be found*, call ye upon him *while he is near*.' 'Behold! now is the accepted time.' 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.' 'Kiss the son, lest he be angry and ye perish, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' Does not the danger here implied alarm you? Presumptuous soul! God's mercy alone sustains you; and will you not fear when he threatens? He can not lie; if you fear not his curse, it will most likely befall you. Oh, what presumption in the delay to repent! Its logic is: 'Great God! I hate thy commands, and can not consent to thy service until I have first had some pleasure; for I am sure there is none in keeping thine exacting precepts. Fill with oil the lamp of life; when burnt down in the devil's service till ready to expire, I solemnly vow to blow

its smoke into thy face as an offering to atone for the contempt in which I have held and still intend to hold thy known will.' What madness, dying man! to ask thus the Divine indulgence that you may insult his majesty, and yet hope to repent and be forgiven!

"Count the probabilities that you will ever become a Christian, if you resist the immediate force of this appeal. Suppose you are twenty years old, and defer repentance till forty. That is not old age; but we will make the calculation on a liberal scale. There is but a half a certainty that you will reach forty; for it is believed that fully half who reach twenty die before forty. Your deathless soul is, then, staked on half a certainty, a mere probability, of its eternal happiness. But stop! *If you live thus long*, is it likely you will incline to seek mercy? Here the chances are decidedly *against* you. Your increasing apathy to religion forbids the expectation. Divergent lines never meet. A planet, thrown from its balance in the mysterious domain of gravitation, while its restraints on the one side grow constantly less, and its attractives, on the other, greater, would never regain the equilibrium of its orbit. Almost as unlikely is it, sinner, that you, after passing youth and middle age in the blaze of gospel day, with your heart growing harder all the time, will, in advanced life, become a Christian. Of those converted in old age a large proportion have had few, or no religious advantages in youth. 'The eleventh hour laborers' furnish no encouragement. They embraced their first offer of wages. *Not one promise in God's Word encourages your expectation.* It is wholly presumptuous and

hazardous. Yourself, I think, will allow that fifty adverse chances, in this case, are against one that is favorable. Thus far, then, we have one-half multiplied by one-fiftieth of a certainty—equal to the one hundredth part of a certainty—not that you will become a Christian, but that *if you reach forty*, you will incline to become one. Oh, what alarm should your soul take! But these are not all the unfavorable chances. *Even if you reach forty, and are then inclined to seek God*, the most awful chances are against you. He may not regard your knocks at mercy's door. The display of mercy has its bounds. To call on God's name only to save us, is to fail of his promise to save. Multitudes ignore this awful truth; and to many such he will say, 'I never knew you.' Many Scriptures already quoted show clearly that there is a point of availability in our moral history, beyond which God mocks at our cries for mercy. The speaker once visited an aged sinner who, on his bed of death, spent nearly an hour in the most earnest cries for mercy. He could hear no advice for the importunity of his prayers; but obtaining no answer, he turned over in sullen despair, and cursing his past neglect of religion, '*It is too late now! I'll never pray again!*' said he, as he raged in the fury of wild anguish; and so he died. Oh, sinner! what a hell to you will be the disappointment, if, with so many chances against that event, you should, in old age, call on God out of an anguished soul, and find him implacable and inexorable! Many aged ones declare they have prayed in vain for the convictions and impulses of youth to favor old age with an inclination and opportunity to turn to God. More

than one-tenth of a certainty you can not claim, that, *if you reach forty, and feel inclined to cry for mercy,* God will accept you. Compounding all the chances, there is but the *one-thousandth part of a certainty that,* if you now delay repentance, *your immortal soul will ever be saved!* Deathless spirit! be alarmed! Thy soul—the price of a Savior's blood, is doomed by one thousand chances against one to immortal woe, if thou harden thy heart now. Methinks I see your terror-stricken spirits descending in wailing lamentations from the bar of the Judge to the regions of immortal woe. My soul entwines its tendrils around you, and refuses to let you go. My heart is melted for you. It would write its warnings and petitions in its own blood, if thus only they might prevail to win you betimes. Why will ye die? Who of you can dwell with devouring flames! My God! my God! do thou the sinner turn!"

That the sermon was accepted of God was manifest in the increased number of anxious inquirers who thronged the Judge's room, on Monday, for religious instruction and prayer. As for the Judge, he could not sleep on Sabbath night. The final banishment of the wicked seemed to stand before him as a present verity. His soul trembled for them, as if witnessing the shrieks and groans with which they should receive their dread sentence "depart," at the last day. During the next day, he was all the day intensely excited with alternate joy and sympathy. The state of his congregation suggested his theme for Monday night: "THE INQUIRER LED TO CHRIST."

For the purpose of benefitting any one of that character into whose hands this little work may fall, the sermon is inserted.

CHAPTER XVI.

“THE AWAKENED SINNER DIRECTED. *Acts* xvi: 30, 31

“‘What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jusus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’

“Is the alarmed inquirer here this evening? Let me address him in the name of the Lord. Disconsolate one, is thy fearful soul wrung with sorrow and remorse? Does conscience drive thee to despair? Does the dread of God’s wrath dispel, for a time, all thy vain pleasures and hopes, and deprive thee of rest? Are thy former ways, while still loved with all the ardor of a depraved heart, now feared as fatal enemies to thy soul? The reason for such distress is far from being imaginary. Thou knowest not yet the depth of thy woeful state. The multitude and turpitude of thy sins thou suspectest not. And of thy pitiable helplessness thou canst by no means conceive, till more deeply sensible of thy true condition.

“I come not to comfort thee. Comfort can only be found in dangerous, ruinous deception; or in an immediate reception of Christ. The consequences of comfort, in the former method, would be both to thee and to me too awful to endure. For comfort in the latter method, thou art not yet prepared. Human comfort to souls in thy condition ends only in the deeper woe hereafter. God alone can give substantial peace. Poor mourners! Experience has taught me to pity your sad and gloomy misery. Gladly would I soothe your sorrow, if I might, with impunity. The cus-

tom, indeed, of many who heal slightly, crying 'Peace,' where there is no peace, seems to require that I should offer you some comfort; but let me rather warn you against the dangers of human comfort, as against slumber in a wilderness infested by ravenous beasts.

"1. Some will pronounce your cases not so bad as you suppose; but be willing to know the worst of your state. God's law, infinitely holy, has condemned your every thought, emotion, word and deed. "Whoso keepeth the whole law, and yet, in one point, offendeth, is guilty of all." 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the law to do them.' A disobedient heart has rendered all your works—even those enjoined by His law—odious in his sight. How many commands and prohibitions have, from the earliest of your intelligence, received only the disregard, even the enmity, of your hearts! What multitudes of sins, then, in a single moment, have been charged to the account of each one of you! Every one of these sins is necessarily infinite, however different in demerit they may appear to men. God's law is infinite, and whatever violates it is necessarily infinitely wrong. All this multitude of infinite sins, you have willingly repeated with every impenitent breath. How many, then, in a single minute! in every minute! Extend the time to an hour, and thought is staggered to conceive of the number! Now, to think of days, weeks, months, years, spent not only in the indulgence of all these sins, but in repeated efforts to justify them! No, sinner! Dream not of comfort till washed from your crimes! Look

well to your state lest you embrace the fatal conclusion—in common with many others, as deeply awakened as you—that your malady can be remedied by a little reformation, a few tears, prayers and duties. Probe that wound till its pain drives thee to the Physician of souls.

“2. Beware of slumber. Many a spell of anguish is buried in a night’s dreamless repose. Let not weariness dispel the consciousness of exposure. Did God’s blessing on last evening’s alarm break thy spell of carnal security? Was thy night sleepless and full of gloom? Remember that awakening is not regeneration. Felix was awakened, and trembled; but he adjourned the things which belonged to his peace, and so may you. Perhaps you already grow stupid. Do you feel less wretched, and at times doubt the reasonableness of your fears and gloom? Do you pray less frequently and less devoutly? O, beware! For the tempter is present with his allurements. Should you come out of this struggle, hardness may render you immovable forever. Hell and destruction are behind thee, if now thy face is turned Zionward. Forget not, for a moment, that solemn truth. Better dread and shun thy danger than be unawares overwhelmed in ruin. Flee for thy life! Let thine own cries keep thee from the stupor and indifference from which thou art now alarmed. Strive to enter in at the strait gate!

“3. Thou art in no less danger from a vain confidence in thine efforts to better thy case before God. To lop off the branches, and hide some of the fruits of thy sinfulness will be pleasing to men and will

be likely to ease the pains of thy conscience; but God sees the inmost heart and is not to be deceived. While the root of evil, in a secret love of sin, is in thy soul, the curse still hangs upon thee. Learn, then, how worthless thy works in God's sight. Tears, prayers, self-denials avail nought till Christ is accepted. In the reception of him alone mayest thou find a medium for the acceptance of those works. In his sight they are—though clearly required by him—only abomination, because offered in thine own name; and that while rejecting the righteousness and advocacy of Christ. So far from being acceptable for your efforts, you are even now, in all your distress, only lying before the cross and insulting the Savior by the wicked effort to fix up your own case, instead of giving it up, in all the fulness of a confiding heart, to his advocacy. It is wicked and dangerous to desire the substitution of your righteousness for his.

“Does not experience tell thee that none of thy prayers have been answered? and dost thou still hope they will be? Thy state is really worse now, than it was last night. What the Gospel requires thou hast refused—to believe on Christ. With the pangs of conscious guilt, thou still triest thine own remedies. Not more sinful and dangerous had it been, if the poisoned Israelites had so long delayed to look to the brazen serpent for their cure. No matter what their apologies; their sin was the delay. They might have said: ‘The wound does not pain me as much as I deserve;’ or ‘I do not yet feel grateful enough for that remedy;’ or ‘it is too simple and easy to be trusted. I will first do all I can

for myself.' Ah! poor soul! Thou hast done too much for thyself already. Thou hast digged the pit of ruin and plunged thyself into its hopeless depths. All thine efforts but sink thee lower and lower. While the shadow of hope to benefit thyself remains, thou wilt not call on the name of the Lord. All thy prayers will be idle mockery. O, sinner! thou knowest not what it is to learn the folly of the best wrought robe of self-righteousness, and to lose thy last hope of salvation in the deepened gloom of conscious guilt and galling wretchedness—to bewail and repent of thy very repentance itself, and to beg forgiveness for all thy prayers. But thou must learn ere the sweets of divine peace fill thy soul.

"4. Be warned against dangerous advisers. Thy present distress, it may be, calls more loudly for relief than for security. Guard well against false peace. Some will bid thee take comfort from thy sorrows, and tears, and prayers—that God will not forget them—that he will not suffer praying souls to be lost, but will bless you by-and-by, when you have prayed more. Such advice, by flattering you with the idea that you can pray off your sins, tends only to make you feel easy in them. Shun all advice that makes you think well of self, or of what you can do. Others, who despise the shallow and dangerous folly of such instruction, will as surely delude by the opposite, and more plausible, extreme: 'Wait God's time. You can do nothing. You are dead in trespasses and sins. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.' Such advisers, by insisting on the worthlessness of your efforts—a truth which can not have too much prominence—and encouraging an

omission of them, without, at the same time, destroying your vain but secret confidence in them, remove the sense of obligation to do the requirements of the law. Such conviction of obligation is essential to repentance. We can not repent of a neglect to do what we feel no obligation to do. A nice distinction here marks the limits between important truth and fatal error. We must feel the full weight of obligation to keep the law, and to worship God with pure hearts; else we can not repent of the failure. We must be also sensible of having wickedly destroyed our ability to do so, or we shall still reject the righteousness which Christ offers in the Gospel. Those, therefore, who preach the doctrine of doing nothing, because we can not do acceptably, in effect teach that to destroy our capability of duty, removes the obligation to do it.

“You have, by your crimes, placed yourselves in such a condition that, though you may do the very things God requires, in everything but to believe on Christ, you do not thereby lessen your guilt, but the very efforts to keep his law and to worship him are abomination in his sight. But your hearts are so proud that you think you can better your case by prayer and other works to which you attach the idea of merit. That thought is wicked. For God says, ‘thou hast destroyed thyself, O Israel; but in me is thy help.’ Now, you have, perhaps, always had the impression that you could help yourselves. Since the indulgence of this sentiment is directly opposed to faith in Christ, how can it be removed else than by your making the effort? We may tell you, and prove it by the Word of God, that both the

thought and the effort are sinful in his sight; but your wicked heart will not believe it until you have tried and failed. It is just as wicked to stand still; because you are in a wicked state—of enmity against God; and whatever you do, or neglect to do, is equally wicked with your state. Had you not then better be urged to make the effort—sinful though it be—whose failure alone can drive from your mind a sentiment which makes it impossible for you to believe on Christ and be saved?

“Whatever else than Christ you confide in as a means of help, if it be a day of fasting and prayer; or a sleepless night's prostration before God; or a journey to New Orleans on a path of thorns; I would tell you, as I do now with tears, you may lose your soul in the effort, but you had better make it in haste that its failure may teach you the need of Christ, and drive you to comply with the injunction of the text.

“You are like a man on a little island in the midst of a swelling and angry tide. The island is soon to be buried beneath the water. A distant ferryman offers to aid his escape to the land. ‘I have never tried,’ replies he, ‘but I think I can swim; and there is time enough yet.’ While he believes so, and has a natural aversion to receiving aid, he will not accept that of the ferryman. Since, to make the cases analogous, he can not swim one stroke to save his life, would not humanity urge him to hasten in the effort, that his vain confidence might not induce his refusal to accept aid, until too late for him to be saved? The effort, it is confessed, is a vain one; and yet, if not made speedily, the man must be drowned. The

advice to stand still, given to an awakened sinner, is the more awfully dangerous, as the soul is of more value than the mere prolongation of life.

“Again, it seems safer to be doing what God clearly requires, though in a spirit so faulty as to lose the benefits of obedience, than with the same imperfect disposition of heart, to neglect all he requires, and even to extenuate our compunctions of conscience by the reflection that, since we have wickedly destroyed our capacities for acceptable obedience, we are excusable for disobedience.

“But why reason this point? The Scriptures have settled it forever. ‘Strive—agonize to enter in at the strait gate.’ ‘Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.’ ‘Except ye repent ye shall perish.’ These passages do not imply that we should feel no obligation to do.

“Others, who deprecate the idea of standing still, may deceive quite as fatally by pointing you to the ordinances, as means of grace, and of moral cleansing. One of the most respectable sects in the South, requires its preachers to encourage the awakened to join the church as a means of spiritual benefit; and even to partake of the Lord’s Supper. But ‘he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.’ Such advice is therefore, extremely dangerous.

“Another body of religionists will deny that you have a right to pray until you get rid of your sins and come into Christ and a state of salvation. They teach that God has let down into the gulf of degradation, into which we have plunged ourselves, a ladder, consisting of four rounds, faith, repentance,

confession, and baptism; and that on this we are to climb up to the favor and heirship of God. The advocates of this theory will meet you, and unless you have too deep an insight into your own wretched hearts, deceive you by reasonings as follow: 'That you are penitents even yourselves can not doubt. Your sorrows prove it. That you are believers in Christ is equally evident; for how could you repent without believing something to make you repent? This is a good start. Two things more must you do, confess and be baptized, and you are then in Christ, and have what your hearts desire—pardon and salvation.' This is very pleasing to the flesh. It flatters you that you need but little, and can do all you need done. But here is its fatal deception: It argues the existence of faith, from the very thing which proves its non-existence, viz.: your sorrows. 'By faith we have access into the grace wherein we stand *and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*' As this proves the faith not to be Gospel faith, it invalidates also the repentance, makes the confession a falsehood, and the baptism a solemn farce. The original of my text says, 'Believe *into* the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' If, then, any one calls that faith in Christ which leaves the soul still out of Christ, and requires baptism to bring him in, it is evidently not the faith of my text, and has not the promise of salvation.

"Peter says baptism 'is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.' 'The filth of the flesh' means every species of sin. 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft,

hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like : of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Gal. v: 19, 20, 21. This list comprehends all sin; and Peter denies that baptism puts it away. To adopt the advice of this sect, is to believe in baptism instead of Christ.

"You may be assailed by the temptation, that morality is sufficient, and may content yourselves with improved outward deportment. Saul was, 'as touching the law, blameless;' yet when he understood the purity and depth of that law, as expounded by that Spirit, who 'opened his eyes to behold its wonderful import,' he exalts the grace of God, as, in him, displayed to the chief of sinners. He, who trusts in mortality, does not believe in Christ. 'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' 'Our righteousnesses are all as filthy rags.'

"After these cautions against trusting in any thing else than in Christ, let us inquire more particularly into the import of the text. The inquirer was certainly a penitent. He had treated the Apostles most vindictively in 'thrusting them into the inner prison,' and then 'making their feet fast in the stocks.' How changed now! 'He brings them out' of the inner prison—falls prostrate with trembling before them, and utters the question of the text. The Apostles considered his repentance genuine. They would else have reproved his hypocrisy. But mark well; he was not a believer in Christ. Had he been,

they would have known it, and given the instruction he needed. Hence we infer the priority of repentance to faith in Christ. These gracious exercises, in order of time, are not distinguishable, being both fruits and evidences of regeneration; but logically contemplated, 'repentance toward God' must precede 'faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' Agreeably to this order are constructed all the passages which mention both. 'Repent and believe the Gospel.' 'Ye repented not that ye might believe.' The Penticostians were commanded to repent; afterward 'they gladly received the Word,' which means, they believed the Gospel.

"Most of you, my hearers, and indeed, most men in all Christendom, think themselves believers of the Gospel. This gives rise to a question of fact which the Bible alone can decide: Are they what they profess to be? The universal testimony of inspiration is that 'faith overcomes the world'—'purifies the heart'—that believers 'shall not come into condemnation'—are 'new creatures,' etc. It is better for us to think you err in the character which your partiality leads you to claim for yourselves than that the Scriptures err in their description of that character. If believers in Christ, you will yield fruits which grow not on the depraved trunk of human nature. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' If you are, as ye think, true believers, this promise in all its fullness is yours. And yet, such a hope is far from most of you, except as you expect to repent hereafter and believe.

"Like most, if not all, the awakened, the inquirer of the text thinks he can *do* something to save him-

self. ‘*What must I do to be saved?*’ But ‘it is the work of God to believe on his Son.’ ‘We believe according to his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.’ Faith in reference to man is not a work but only a medium of appropriation. By it we receive the impress and righteousness of Christ, as the eye receives the image of an object. Paul denies that we are justified by works; but affirms that we are justified by faith. In the nature of faith consists one of the mysteries of God’s righteousness. The Jews ‘being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.’ ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they are spiritually discerned.’ By the converted the mystery is easily comprehended. Without heavenly generation, Nicodemus, even with the Divine Teacher, could not understand it. The inquirer’s purpose of doing was faulty—‘*to be saved.*’ Many take the Christian name and deny themselves, do sacrifice, pray, read their Bibles, attend church, etc., etc., in order to shun hell, and gain a seat at God’s right hand. A society founded on this belief will not be wanting in external evidences of prosperity. They can raise money, build fine temples of worship and of learning, and sustain their missions and ministers far more liberally than do those who have experimental appreciation of those Scriptures which teach that our works, in no way, contribute to the salvation of our souls, but only prove that we are in a gracious state. The one of these theories arouses all the energies of depraved man,

pride, self-interest, the desire and expectation of the highest good, in the effort to merit salvation; the other paralyzes all these energies with the conscious worthlessness of all that we can do to promote our own salvation, and leaves us no motive but the desire to glorify Him that saves us without merit in ourselves. Against this desire antagonize all the energies of unsanctified nature. The regenerate are at first only babes in Christ. In what this purpose of love inspires them to do for the cause of God, they are opposed by the mature impulses of the flesh. It may hence be true that a body, fatally heterodox, may evince, in ostentatious labors for their cause, more zeal than one which is pure in faith; but the latter will always abound in a class of services, unknown to the former, but far richer in God's esteem—the devotion of the heart in secret communion, meditation, self-examination. What body ever more fully ignored the soul of piety than Romanism? and yet none ever equaled its spirit of ostentatious sacrifice and devotion. None could raise so much money to propagate its principles. An apathy to the overt interests of Zion, it is true, proves its subject fatally heterodox and unregenerate; but the converse is not equally true. We may, without love, 'give our bodies to be burned,' and 'all our goods to feed the poor.'

"What influence is exerted in regeneration, if any, by efforts to expound the matter? To the curious this is a natural question. We are 'begotten through the Word of truth which liveth and abideth in us.' Here the Scriptures leave the mystery, and here let us leave it. If regeneration is 'through

the Word of truth,' though we may not be able to tell how, should we not simplify and illustrate it in the best manner we can? God is more likely to honor with success faithful ministers than superficial and unfaithful ones.

"Let us, then, attempt to simplify the duty, here enforced by the promise of salvation. To the believer, it is the simplest of all exercises. Those to whom its exercise is still a mystery, are unbelievers. If the deceived are here, may the effort develop to them a sense of their condition! May it also confirm the feeble hopes of any who fear to claim the consolations which, by God's grace, belong to them! The unconverted are not sensible of all the hindrances to belief in Christ. May they be rendered apparent! Believers can not only appreciate them, but remember when and how they gave way.

"Has each one of my dear congregation felt that illumination which is the opposite of spiritual blindness? If so, you know it. You may, indeed, have seasons of gloom at times, which cause you to doubt the divinity of the change; but still you know you have felt the change itself. Think you that the blind, when suddenly introduced by the creation of vision into a world of light and beauty never before realized by him, would not be conscious of the change? or that the dead, raised suddenly to life—or the deaf, ushered suddenly from a world of dead silence into a concert of music, rich as that whose strains have just now raised our souls, as it were, to the third heaven; think you that the subjects of such changes could be insensible of them? Neither can the subjects of faith forget the ecstatic influence

of its first exercise upon their souls. Many who profess faith, will deny such influences; but the denial only proves that they have not experienced the exercise of faith itself. Your preacher might, on the same principle, deny that any ever felt tooth-ache. He, never having experienced it, can not appreciate the apparent exaggerations of its misery often given by its experienced victims.

"Ere the soul reposes in Christ, it passes a struggle awful as death itself. It never after thinks Paul's speech too strong, when he says, 'We have died to sin.' Trace the soul through this struggle. Every conceivable effort has been made to soothe a burning conscience. With each effort and failure, the hope of success has grown fainter and fainter, until it has expired in cheerless gloom. The soul, falling on the untried mercy of God, its last, because its only, resort, is surprised by a dazzling flash of his glory—is filled with joy unutterable.

"In this struggle it gains a knowledge of itself. Till now, it feels not its own depravity—doubts the accuracy of its image as mirrored from the Bible; but now it perceives that its baseness can not be pictured in mortal language. It learns, too, its hatred of God. It had before denied, and even disbelieved, the charge of its own enmity; but now, as its own best wrought mantle of righteousness, loved for the sake of its idolized author, is spurned by the Holy God, as a filthy thing, and the soul itself, driven by the unappeased curse of the law from the pride of its own sufficiency into utter despair of aid from self or man, the fury and malice of the heart disclose themselves in wicked suspicions that God is

cruel and unjust. The converted have no doubts about their having hated God by nature. Nor ends this hate till God's Spirit convinces of righteousness—that God, the law, the doom—are all just. He is now reconciled to the sentence of God, and in the consciousness of his guilt, is ready to sign his own death-warrant, and thus vindicate the Almighty from the aspersions with which his own wicked heart had often sought to brand him.

“His weakness, too, he now realizes for the first time. He had thought it easy to turn from sin—to free the conscience from its pangs—the character from its stains, and the mind from the annoying influence of its habits; but alas! he finds them all to be chains of Herculean power. He yields his plastic soul to the molding touch of the Divine hand.

“‘With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.’ That heart, ‘filled with all unrighteousness and sin,’ must be vacated ere it can receive the Lord Jesus. Its love of sin must be blasted. O, how strong this is! As pursued by the fiery law, he seeks the favor of God, his inmost soul still reserves its recourse on the world and its pleasures, unwilling to renounce them till God's favor is realized, and found sufficient to compensate for the sacrifice. Of this reserve its own subject is generally unconscious till it is surrendered; but the Searcher of hearts reveals no gleam of his mercy until it is utterly renounced.

“To illustrate the soul's reluctance to resign its sinful pleasures: There is a man pursued by the avenger of blood. In his flight, he enters a dark hall, with no visible outlet but the door through

which he entered. He observes that this door has a massive spring-lock, and when shut can be opened only from without. While retreat is impossible, the avenger permits him to pause here, he knows not how long. If he closes the door, life's pleasures are all from him entombed forever. For his little space of time his mind is imprisoned in the deepest gloom, dead to the past, and without hope for the future. What is he to do? A voice, which he scarce dares to confide is friendly, bids him close that door to be opened no more forever; that till he does so, no way of escape can be revealed. In trembling dread, he stands within. With one hand upon the knob, he notes the avenger's near and rapid approach. He tries the door till but a ray of light relieves the gloom of his dungeon. No ray from another direction is seen to enter. What suspense! An age of misery pressed into a single moment! In the deepest despair he exclaims, 'Must I risk all for the mere chance of an escape I can not see to be possible?' 'Close that door and all is well,' whispers the voice in more friendly accents. Nerved by the energy of despair, his voice cries out, 'I can only perish!' and his hand closes the door. Thus the sinner relaxes his hold on the world, when Mercy's door, 'on golden hinges turning,' reveals to his ravished vision the smiling presence of his Deliverer. God never blesses the soul still in league with sin. The last idol must be dethroned ere he fills the heart with his love. Others and even ourselves we may deceive by the idea that we have, in our hearts, renounced sin and its pleasures; but God reads actions and words in their deep purposes. Till the

surrender is without reserve, he imparts no peace. In the deep councils of the soul, injuries must be forgiven; grudges buried; wrongs repaired; all sin divorced; all duties undertaken. In this is felt one part of the agony with which we enter life; but this is not all. No! the deep throes of soul are yet undescribed. Stripped of self, of his apologies for sin, his robe of righteousness consumed to the last shred by the flames of God's law, loathing himself as an abominable piece of rottenness, the disconsolate one sees, for the first time, the immaculate purity and awful majesty of God's character, as revealed in his law; that the heavens are impure in his sight, and his angels he charges with folly; that he beholds sin with not the least allowance. Thus naked, and covered with the shame of confusion and disgrace, he must enter His audience chamber and plead guilty, before pardon can be extended. Ah! how sinks the soul! I feel the anguish over again in every effort to realize or portray it. Had you felt it, you would not wonder that utterance is choked with emotion and tears now. To believe in Christ alone can embolden the soul to lift its petitions to God. You may have said prayers a thousand times, but never before with a proper sense of your own character, approached God in the terrible majesty of his.

"O, my hearers! Have you believed on Christ? Methinks I hear in the sobs and sighs of more than four scores now within these walls, that you fear to venture on him. Well, if your sins have so hardened you that neither a sense of your need, nor the invitations and promises of the Gospel can constrain

you, then you must indeed perish. But the sin and the censure are yours, not God's.

"But why need you fear? Beneath that long catalogue of daring crimes you now see appended to your name and interwoven with your ruined character, you may write: '*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin;*' and with this promise in your heart: '*Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out,*' you may, though the chief of sinners, pick up courage and venture to believe on him.

"'But my sins are so great,' says one, now in the very agonies of despair, 'I have sinned against so much light and so many opportunities to do better, I fear my day of grace is past.' Remember 'Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Are you lost? 'He came to seek and to save the lost.' 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.' While ignorant of your sins, you thought it a light matter to approach God; but now you may well fear the result, unless you go in Christ's name. While he lives and intercedes you need not fear.

"But you still cling to something. I know not what; perhaps you are also unconscious. Wretched trust! It will prove your ruin, unless speedily abandoned. Do you trust to your prayers? Have they not deceived you long enough to break that confidence? Not one of them can be accepted till you believe on Christ. A moment's delay may ruin your soul. 'Now is the acceptable time.' 'To-day is the day of salvation.' 'Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace.' He can not reject one who

comes with all his heart. Think how he died for *rebel* sinners; and will he cast off a penitent? No! He bids you come and welcome.

'To-day the Savior calls—
Ye wand'ers come!
O, ye benighted souls,
Why longer roam?'

"From the command of the text, turn now to its encouragement: 'Thou shalt be saved.' Though the spirit of faith and obedience asks not the reasons, but obeys from love; yet our indulgent God affixes to many of his commands important promises. 'Ask; ye shall receive. Seek; ye shall find.' It is so in this instance.

"'Thou shalt be saved;' then the inquirer was still lost. The believer in Christ is saved; no other character is. Some contend that the salvation promised was from the vengeance of the rulers, who would be incensed, when they learned that the prison had been opened. But instead, it would have provoked their vengeance. The salvation promised is:

"1. From the galling load of guilt now felt, to a 'peace which passeth all understanding;' a 'joy unutterable and full of the Holy Spirit.' 'A good hope through grace.'

"2. From the dominion of sin through remaining life, to a holy walk with God. 'To maintain good works,' 'which God hath ordained that we should walk in them;' because 'sin shall not have dominion over us.'

"3. From final perdition to the saints' inheritance in everlasting life. To elaborate these points might

be agreeable to all, and might promote the congruity of the sermon; but it is deemed more important for you, my dying hearers, that this promise be vindicated from a suspicion raised and advocated through the press and from the pulpit, that it may, and often does, fail and disappoint even those who embrace it. Such advocates, in effect, make the text read: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou *mayest perhaps* be saved.' But, poor mourning inquirer, God be thanked that it reads not so. If it did, we should have no encouragement for you. The dreadful adventure of your souls into the presence of God could be supported by no certain promise of his favor. The sweetness of our Gospel would be all changed to bitter by such revision of the text.

"'Thou shalt be saved.' This promise depends not upon the contingencies of stability and perseverance in an unsanctified nature. God sanctifies and holds with an almighty hand all that he calls—all that are regenerated—all that believe. 'Ye are dead,' says an apostle, 'and your life is hid with Christ in God.' 'Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' Though it is 'through faith,' it is 'by the power of God.' Ye need not suspect that your faith will fail, and thus sever the cord that binds you to Christ. That power, which breaks the dominion of sin—brings the rebel to Christ—turns the hate to love, and the love to hate—is also able to seal the soul unto the day of redemption. You need entertain no fears that Satan will wrest you from God's hand—deprive you of that heavenly generation which faith in Christ presupposes—blot the

image of your Divine Father from your soul—metamorphose you a second time into a child of the devil, and in spite of the Almighty's efforts to prevent, drag you down to hell. I declare I doubt whether the fiend of darkness can breathe such a sentiment into a gracious soul. It so manifestly dishonors God and degrades him even below the devil, that I awfully doubt whether its subject is a friend of God. Preach it who will; it tends to quiet every struggle in the inquirer, and so soon as he learns his own weakness, to settle him down in infidelity.

“The Bible denies the sentiment. No one ever became a Christian, and then fell from God's grace and was lost. For eighteen centuries has Satan been trying thus to weaken Christ's kingdom, by the abduction of its subjects. Could he now, or ever, succeed, all hell would hold a jubilee—and having learned the art, all the armies of heaven could not prevent his success in a single case afterward. But that art he never can learn. ‘Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, *shall not come into condemnation.*’ ‘Whosoever believeth on the Son hath *everlasting life.*’ Without this truth, the Gospel would be no Gospel. What! call it good news that after the awful struggles realized in every conversion, the convert may immediately, or ever, be cheated by Satan, out of the *eternal life* the Bible declares every believer to possess? Is it common for the heirs of grace to fall from their heavenly sonship, and lose their inheritance? If so, the angels must know it; why then do they rejoice in the proof of regeneration, which the repentance of a sinner gives? Why

do they not withhold their rejoicings till they see whether or not, God finally succeeds in his purpose to deliver him from the devil. I should think the angels would be ashamed to rejoice in his salvation too soon, and then, after proclaiming, in glad anthems, the triumph of their King, to have to fold their wings and weep over his damnation.

“ Would Christ, who is enthroned at God’s right hand, to display and prove to the universe of angels, principalities and powers, the truth, that his glorious plan of salvation blasts and cures forever, in every one he pardons and justifies, the disposition to sin, and makes him a loyal subject of his reign, for time and eternity, be so often, or even once, deceived in those he marks for his own, whose names he writes in the Lamb’s book of life, and for whose perseverance he binds himself as surety? Having engaged himself as both the surety and conductor of his elect, does he fail to bear them through because he finds the wilderness of life more perilous than he expected—and infested with dangers he is not prepared, or able to meet and overcome? No! my hearers! One single failure would fill the heavenly ranks with distrust and disaffection. The angels—those unfallen ones that bathe in the effulgence of the unvailed Deity, and delight in the execution of his will—that bend their minds to discover the mysteries of a redemption which magnifies the Divine law even in rescuing from its penalty the objects of its righteous curse—that wonder most how it will accomplish its promise to hold fast all its recipients, nor lose one in the angry commotions of life;—yes, the angels, if one ransomed soul should perish,

would spurn the whole scheme of redemption as a solemn farce—would deny the veracity and omnipotency of Jehovah—would spurn his claimed right to rule in the armies of heaven, and among the children of men; and would each, in the fierce contest for the dominion of all others, and even of that God himself whom they had seen foiled by the enchained victims of his own curse, and that in the effort to display the glory of his power, in the work of salvation, aid in destroying the harmony of the universe, and end the whole scheme of providence and redemption in anarchy and chaotic ruin. Such consequences would inevitably follow the apostacy, whether accidental or voluntary, of a single believer. In Adam, as the representative of our race, we all fell voluntarily; if in Christ, we can fall in the same way,' Paul is mistaken, when he declares believers to be 'conquerors and more than conquerors through him that loved us.' We should not even be made conquerors; for we should still be at the mercy of the devil. If even conquerors, we overcome him, and recover all that we lost in the perilous contest with him. If 'more than conquerors,' we gain, with our recovered possessions, spoils from the enemy. What spoils do we gain in Christ, not lost in Adam? To note them may give force to the argument. We learn the wiles of our enemy. To know that a temptation is such, is a grand means of resistance. We learn how to foil him—with the Word of God, and prayer, and watchfulness. We gain the advocacy of an almighty Mediator, who mantles, with his own righteousness, our sins and imperfections.

“Again; we learn God’s character as it could not be revealed to the unfallen. Can they who have no ill deserts and misery, comprehend his mercy? or they who have not rebelled, understand his forbearance? Can they who have never been delinquent in obedience and loyalty, fathom the depth of his patience? or they, that have never wallowed in rottenness and degradation, the mystery of his love? Can any thing but the Gospel display the glory of his power? or any thing but the plan of redemption the depth of his wisdom? Can aught, but the sufferings of his Son, exhibit his devotion to justice? or aught, but the damnation of the wicked, his hatred of sin? From our standpoint alone, as fallen beings, raised by Christ, can we gaze upon the infinite and infinitely diversified splendors of that character which eternity alone can reveal in all its fulness to finite minds.

“The adoration of that character is to be the soul’s banquet during eternal ages. Each additional glimpse of its glory we are enabled to grasp, will be an infinite and eternal accession to our happiness. It was not all a lie that the deceiver told, when he said, ‘Ye shall be like gods, knowing good and evil.’

“In the sufferings that, with sin ‘and all our woe,’ were entailed upon us, we acquire another capacity for the enjoyment of eternal happiness, by the contrast between the sorrows and toils of this life, and the bliss and repose of that to come. Rest is sweet to the laborer; plenty, to him that want has pressed; certainty, to him that has been often disappointed; reliable friends, to those often duped by deceivers;

health, to those worn down with infirmities. Such antitheses are feeble aids to conceive of the 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' which 'the light afflictions' of this life 'work out for them that love God.' We shall be 'more than conquerors;' and if believers in Christ, we 'shall be saved.'

"Would Christ else say to the deceived, 'I *never* knew you?' Would he not rather say, 'I knew you once, and have eaten and drunken with you at my table; but you strayed away, and I have forgotten you?' That would be more in accordance with the truth, if the theory of apostacy be correct:

"The fearful soul that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
Is but esteemed almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure.'

"How important to obey the injunction of the text! How reliable the motive, '*shalt* be saved!' and then how weighty, too, '*shalt* be *saved*!' Conception and utterance are staggered by the divine import of the word 'SAVED.' It is an endless volume, whose frontispiece is the star of Hope, more brilliant than the unclouded sun; its preface, the enthroned Savior, with all hell and its emissaries trembling in chains at his feet; its introduction, the redeemed hosts, robed in garments of purity, panoplied from the armory of heaven, their faces lit by the effulgence of Hope; its first article, these hosts, marshaled by the Captain of their campaign, treading under their feet their harmless foes, themselves being pavilioned beneath the rainbow of promise, sparkling with a thousand jewels of consolation; its

next chapter, the requiem of all the sorrows, doubts, toils, anxieties, temptations, errors, and impatience of this life; next, the believer's tranquil, or triumphant death; then the retinue of angels, escorting him to mansions of the blessed, while peans of glory are reverberated from the concave of immensity; further on are described the plains decked and fragrant with every variety of flowers unfading, and fruits ambrosial, ever fresh with the vapors from the river of life; on another page, begin the happy salutations of friends parted long, but now met to part no more. Rich volume! Eternal ages of the most delightful study will leave its utmost depths still unfathomed.

"Such treasures, in certain prospect, are very near the believer. Life seems long when future, but short when past. Over sixty years of my existence have sped like a weaver's shuttle. It can't be long now. No! With the hope of heaven in my heart, I feel that a few more sorrows and tempests past, I shall be there. Sinners! come and go! You are dying here. Without Christ you have no sweet hope to sustain you now, and to scatter the gloom of death. O, sinner! tarry not! Heaven will repay the agony with which it must be gained."

For more than an hour the immensely crowded audience listened as if spell-bound, for the most part bathed in tears. The sermon in ink and paper is lifeless and dull, compared with its resistless power, as it poured from his earnest heart. The solemnity of the congregation beggars description and must be past to the reader's imagination. Several songs that aided the conception of heaven's music, and a few

earnest prayers, had detained the audience an hour longer, when the Judge, overpowered with emotions, of which his words can give no conception, arose and attempted to speak. With smothered utterance, he wrote these farewell words in the hearts of the audience as he sent them away: "I feel as I never did before. I was thinking of promising to present you, on to-morrow night, *THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS LIFE OF SACRIFICE AND DUTY*; but *where is to-morrow?* is a question of great moment, that seized my mind, as it has never done before. Sinner! repent now! It may be too late to-morrow. 'That thou doest, do quickly.' Time speeds away."

The next morning, at the inquiry meeting, which was very full and solemn, the Judge, though very feeble from loss of sleep and the incessant labors of the meetings and of the private conversations, in which the awakened, that thronged his room, kept him almost, constantly engaged, was, if possible, even more impressive and interesting than the evening before.

The hour for pulpit exercises has arrived. A breathless multitude have been waiting in the sanctuary with the solemnity of death for half an hour. A messenger enters, bearing and delivering the sad tidings that Judge Rolan is dead. He had died of apoplexy.

THE END.

6 July 1860.

The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation. It is only about 150 years old, and its history is therefore a history of rapid growth and change. The second is the fact that the United States is a large nation. It covers a vast area of land, and its population is one of the largest in the world. The third is the fact that the United States is a diverse nation. It is made up of many different peoples, languages, and customs. The fourth is the fact that the United States is a powerful nation. It has a strong economy, a powerful military, and a great influence on the world. The fifth is the fact that the United States is a free nation. It has a long tradition of freedom, and its people enjoy many rights and liberties. The sixth is the fact that the United States is a democratic nation. Its people elect their representatives, and they have a say in the government. The seventh is the fact that the United States is a peaceful nation. It has never been at war with itself, and it has always been a friend to peace. The eighth is the fact that the United States is a nation of opportunity. It is a place where anyone can succeed, and where there are many chances for a better life. The ninth is the fact that the United States is a nation of hope. It is a place where the future is bright, and where there is always something to look forward to. The tenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of love. It is a place where people care for each other, and where there is always a helping hand.

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ISSUE 14,000 WEEKLY.

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(ISSUE 1500.—QUARTERLY, \$2 00 PER ANNUM.)

Editors—J. R. GRAVES, Nashville. J. M. PENDLETON, *Union University, Tenn.* A. C. DAYTON, Nashville, Tenn.

This work entered upon its third volume January 1st, 1857. It has already secured a high position as a Theological and Literary work; and as a staunch *denominational* publication, it has no equal. The publishers will spare no expense in the typographical department, and confidently appeal to the Baptist ministry and membership, South, to extend to it a liberal patronage.

The following notices reflect the opinion of the Baptist press, South:

Biblical Recorder, N. C.

The work is decidedly a Baptist work: it sets forth and defends their views of scriptural doctrine with a clearness, pungency, and power which we have seldom seen equalled. We most heartily recommend this Review as an able exposition of Baptist orthodoxy.

Religious Herald, Richmond, Va.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST REVIEW.—We have received No. 1 of Volume II. of this Review—Graves, Marks & Company, Publishers, Nashville—Elder J. R. Graves, J. M. Pendleton, and A. C. Dayton, Editors. It is much more Baptist than the Christian Review, being devoted more exclusively to Baptist literature, to the maintenance of our tenets and practice, and to refuting the objections of gainsayers. It is an able and practical work, is doing good service, and ought to receive a liberal patronage.

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Volume I. ; pp. 400; \$1.

THEODOSIA ERNEST;

OR,

TEN DAYS' TRAVEL IN SEARCH OF THE CHURCH.

Volume II. ; pp. 485; \$1.

It has been said by those well acquainted with our religious literature, that the two denominational works of equal ability and value have ever been written in America. The first volume treats of the Act and Subjects of Baptism, in connection with the Conversion and Baptism of Theodosia,—and of Restricted Communion,—to relieve the doubts of several of her near relatives and friends. The second volume treats exclusively of *Church Polity*; or which, of all the rival sects in Christendom, is the Church of Christ, or like the church at Jerusalem, or the churches of Judea, Samaria, and Galatia, or are they all equally scriptural churches? The essential characteristics of a scriptural church are first ascertained by a thorough examination of the Scriptures, and the organization, polity, doctrines, and history of all the so-called “evangelical churches,” tried by these scriptural characteristics. It is a text-book on Church Polity, as volume first is upon the Act, the Subjects of Baptism, and the Communion Question. The logic is irresistible, and the style of the works of such inimitable freshness, that whoever reads one page will never stop satisfied short of a perusal of the entire series. Christians of all names read them with equal avidity.

If it is said they are *novels*, that the characters and narrative part are fictitious, let it be answered, So are the parables of the Saviour,—of “The Prodigal Son,” of “The Rich Man and Lazarus,” of “The Wicked Husbandmen;” let it be answered, So is the narrative of Bunyan’s immortal work, and of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The Saviour’s hearers understood as well as Bunyan’s and Milton’s readers understand, perfectly well, that these were fictitious narratives, employed to gain attention to a real truth. Such fiction is no falsehood. It is not intended to deceive, and it does not deceive. Its object is accomplished when it has won the attention to the truth of which it is made the vehicle.

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The argument is complete in each volume, upon the subject treated, so that either may be read without the other.

From the Biblical Recorder, N. C.

THEODOSIA; OR, THE HEROINE OF FAITH.

We have read with no little interest this most excellent book. It possesses all the seriousness of truth, in tracing step by step the progress of a sincere inquirer after God only. We can no better express the high estimate we place upon it than by

CATALOGUE OF BOOKS.

saying, that if its author should ever write another book, it will call forth his highest skill to make one that shall equal in interest his *Theodosia Ernest*. . . . The spirit which *Theodosia* discovers in her search for the right way—her struggles in breaking from old connections—the giving up the church in which she was early received, in order to discharge a duty, will find a response in the bosom of thousands who have been similarly situated.

From the True Union, Baltimore.

This work first appeared in the *Tennessee Baptist*, and now comes out in a handsome volume, with a portrait of *Theodosia*. It is a series of strong and conclusive arguments upon the mode and subjects of Baptism and the close communion question, with a very slight veil of fiction to impart additional interest to the work.

From the Texas Baptist.

As thousands fall in love with the "*Heroine of Faith*," upon first sight—as the publishers find it almost impossible to supply the demand for the book—as it has produced such an immediate and wide-spread enthusiasm—the philosopher, as well as the theologian, should inquire into the causes of its powerful effects. So far as we have seen, the multitude of critics and reviewers have only admired the foliage, flower and fruit, without analyzing the soil, or seed, or root. Why will *Theodosia* accomplish immensely more good than any other book upon the baptismal controversy?

We believe it is Macanlay who says that the *Pilgrim's Progress* will be read by the child for the story, by the Christian for the piety, and by the genius for the literary merit. This will equally apply to *Theodosia*. We ventured to prophesy several years since of a class of teachers who shall arise from the future, to adapt moral instruction to grown people, in the same natural and attractive style in which Sunday-school books interest and instruct children; and the author who may, with graphic power, represent ethics and theology in persons, acts, and scenes, will be read by excited millions, and will bless each delighted reader. To prove this statement we need only refer to Bunyan. This prophecy, which we uttered several years since, has its fulfilment commenced in *Theodosia*. We hail "*The Heroine of Faith*" as "*the morning star*" of that brighter day, when moral truth shall be addressed to the aptitudes and capacities of the mind in histories, memoirs, biographies—in parables, narratives, illustrations—in books adapting "*moral instruction to grown people in the same natural and instructive style in which Sunday-school books interest and instruct children.*"

From the Commission, Richmond, Va.

[This notice was written by A. M. Poindexter, Editor.]

THEODOSIA ERNEST; OR, THE HEROINE OF FAITH. Nashville, Tenn.: Graves, Marks & Rutland. New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co.

We have received from the author this interesting and valuable work. We read portions of it as they were issued in the *Tennessee Baptist*, and since the publication of the book had occasionally looked over some of the chapters. Since receiving the copy from the author, we have found time to give it a thorough perusal. We had before been pleased with what we had read, but had no just appreciation of the interest and value of the work. It attracts the mind with the fascination of a novel, but the interest of the narrative only fixes the attention upon the argument. The author has evidently no mean capacity as a writer of fiction, but he displays even superior ability for close analysis and correct reasoning. It is one of the fairest and most conclusive, and certainly the most attractive, arguments we have read upon the subjects—Baptism and Communion. It is written in a kind and courteous spirit. There is nothing to offend the most refined taste or delicate sensibility.

Buy the book and read it, and we are sure you will desire to promote its circulation.

From the Home and Foreign Journal.

[Review by Elder James B. Taylor, Richmond, Va.]

This is one of the books to be unconditionally recommended.

From the Louisiana Baptist.

It teaches the truth in a forcible and agreeable manner. In point of argument, few works on baptism excel it, while it has the advantage of being so plain that all can comprehend it. It is, upon the whole, a masterly production—a remarkable book.

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BOOK PUBLICATIONS.

THE GREAT IRON WHEEL;

OR,

METHODISM SHOWN TO BE REPUBLICANISM BACKWARDS
AND CHRISTIANITY REVERSED.

By J. R. GRAVES, *Editor of Tennessee Baptist.*

576 pages; price \$1.00, sent by mail; or \$75 by the hundred copies.

This work in twelve months from its publication reached its twelfth edition without the usual appliances of publishers to push their publications. The demand for it is still unabated, and is exhausting an edition per month.

It is considered in all respects the most thorough review and *expose* of government and peculiar doctrines of Methodist Hierarchy ever published. It is not an attack upon *individuals*, but upon *principles*—the POPISH features of American Methodism.

Every American Churchman and Christian ought to read this work

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

New York Recorder and Register, New York.

This volume is a popular and effective onslaught upon *Methodism* as taught in the Discipline, and illustrated practically in the South-west. * *

This book illustrates the whole subject of Methodism as seen from such a position and under such lights, and makes an exposure which cannot but be felt with immense damage to a system so utterly without warrant of scripture or antiquity. A system of bishops, like a system of monarchy, must be very old to be respectable.

The Watchman and Reflector, Boston.

In contrasting "Cook's Centuries" with the GREAT IRON WHEEL, the editor says: "In such a 'formal estimate of Methodism,' it is certainly surprising that the author, [Mr. Cook,] who is an able defender of Congregational polity, should have passed over as he has the governmental framework of the Methodist Church—its essential monarchy and consequent incongruity, as flourishing in the soil of democratic institutions. *This argument, which the author of the 'Great Iron Wheel' has used with decided cogency and effect, is displaced in Dr. Cook's book by points such as we have enumerated, but which all put together have, as compared with this one, far less metal and weight.*"

Report of Committee appointed by the Publication Society of N. Ca.

With greatly increased confidence in the truthfulness of the positions discussed in the Great Iron Wheel, and more than ever convinced that its circulation will have a tendency to correct error, and to disseminate sound, scriptural views upon the subject of Church Government,

We remain your faithful servants,

JAS. McDANIEL,
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By G. H. ORCHARD, of England. Introductory Essay by J. R. GRAVES. pp. 300.

This is what it purports to be, a History of the Church of Jesus Christ, not of the Romish Apostacy or any of her branches. It is unquestionably the most valuable Church History ever written. The author has incontestably proved from Pedobaptist Historians and Scholars, that the Baptist churches are the only Christian communities that have stood since the days of the Apostles. The American Editor has received the thanks of the Baptists for introducing this work to the American public. Next to the Bible it is a truthful History of the Church. Let your children be made familiar with this work, and they will never join a Pedobaptist Society. Send \$1.00 to GRAVES, MARKS & Co.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

From the Religious Herald, Richmond, Va.

We have copied at full length this title page, as it furnishes a clear idea of the objects of the work, and the results it aims to accomplish. It is a handsome 12mo. volume, of 408 pages, well-known and highly appreciated in England, and frequently referred to by writers on baptism in the United States. A few copies only have found their way here, and met with a ready sale. It is now re-published by Graves, Marks, & Co., Nashville, and Sheldon, Blake-man & Co., New York. We rejoice at its appearance, having long had a desire to secure a copy of this work, and we believe a more acceptable gift could not have been presented to the Baptist Church. We thank Elder Graves, the prime agent in re-publishing this work, for his labor of love. He has prefixed an able Introductory Essay, which enhances its value. We have no doubt but that it will be heartily received and extensively circulated.

It is a step towards furnishing a true history of the church in the right direction. Heretofore, with the exception of Jones' Church History has been but the record of the progress and triumphs of the Man of Sin--the proceedings and details of an apostate church. Of the faithful few, who kept the truth amidst a faithless host, compelled to flee to, and abide for a season in the wilderness, seeking refuge in the caves and dens of the mountains, no note has been taken, nor record made, until a recent period. Placed under the ban of church and state; deemed heretics; slandered and persecuted; they were too obscure to notice; and their history at some periods, could scarcely be traced. Still the Lord ever had a people of a pure speech, and maintaining the ordinances, and the great principles of primitive Christianity, in truth and simplicity. Though widely apart--separated by seas and oceans; without communication with each other; whether in Asia, Italy, France, Spain, the Turkish and Austrian dominions, Great Britain and Ireland, they exhibited the same regard for truth, and for the word of God.





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